

EARLY MEDIEVAL SCULPTURE IN THE  
WEST HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND

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Mar chuimhneachan air mo sheanair  
Murchadh Stiùbhart Mac Ghill'Eathain

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## DECLARATION

The idea for the topic of this thesis evolved during the course of research undertaken in my first year in Edinburgh, in consultation with Mr. John Higgitt. The thesis was written by me and is entirely the result of my own research.

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RCAHMS Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis places the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands, which has previously been studied primarily in relation to either Pictish or Irish sculpture, in its own cultural context. The region is separated from the rest of Scotland by the watershed of Druimalban (the "Spine of Britain") and formed a distinctive cultural area between the late sixth and the twelfth century.

Four major categories of sculpture are discussed: Pictish symbol stones, cross-marked and cruciform stones, the sculptured stone crosses of the Iona School, and monuments carved after the devastating Viking attack on Iona in 806. A review of place-name, archaeological and historical evidence establishes the existence of a Pictish province west of Druimalban, which was lost to the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata at the end of the seventh century. Typological examination dates the western Pictish symbol stones to the period when control of the Pictish western province passed to Dál Riata. The lateness of the western symbol stones is used to argue for an emergence date of c. 600 for the symbol stone series east of Druimalban. The establishment of the kingdom of Dál Riata provides the background for the introduction of Christianity from Ireland. Cross-marked and cruciform stones are found throughout the region and illustrate the spread of Gaelic Christianity, beginning in the late sixth century. Simple incised crosses are seen to exemplify the "white martyrdom" of monastic and eremitic life. Iona's central role in the development of Gaelic monasticism provides the context for the Iona School of crosses, which is dated between the mid-eighth century and the beginning of the ninth. The iconography and decoration of the Iona School crosses reflect artistic contact with Pictland and Northumbria, but it is argued that

they were carved by Gaelic sculptors influenced by native metalwork and iconographical sources brought from the Continent of Europe. Viking raids and settlement in the first half of the ninth century led to the removal of the centre of the Columban paruchia from Iona to Kells in Ireland, the unification of the Dalriadic and Pictish kingdoms and the transference of royal rule to the east of Druimalban. Sculpture carved west of Druimalban between the mid-ninth and the eleventh century was, for the most part, outside the mainstream of Gaelic art and represents fusions in varying combinations of Gaelic, Pictish and Scandinavian taste. The Scandinavian contribution was minimal and only one monument of inferior quality, which may be as late as the early twelfth century, was carved in one of the principal Viking styles.

Sculpture carved in the West Highlands and Islands between the late sixth and the twelfth centuries provides a record in stone of an area in the process of developing cultural unity. The cohesion achieved by Dál Riata in the late seventh and eighth centuries was destroyed by the Vikings and a new synthesis was achieved by the kindred of Somerled, beginning in the mid-twelfth century. Artistically, the late medieval sculpture of the Lordship of the Isles is of provincial importance, but the West Highlands and Islands made a major contribution to the early medieval art of northern Britain and Ireland.

## I. INTRODUCTION: ANTIQUARIANISM AND SCHOLARSHIP TO 1940

In studying the art of the six remaining crosses of the early medieval Iona School of Sculpture, and the fragment of a seventh, the historian of art is confronted by the failure of extant art historical scholarship to place that art within its proper cultural context. The first twentieth-century attempt to explain the Iona crosses within their own Gaelic<sup>1</sup> milieu was essayed by the American art historian Professor Arthur Kingsley Porter in his 1931 Crosses and Culture of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> Porter, a leading authority on Spanish Romanesque sculpture, suspected that the last great body of monumental sculpture in western Europe, before the emergence of Spanish Romanesque, with which it overlaps, was composed of the ninth and tenth century high crosses of Ireland. Porter's tentative efforts quickly gave way to the lifework of Dr. Francoise Henry, who entered the field with La sculpture irlandaise in 1933.<sup>3</sup> The writer is far less willing to dismiss Henry's scholarship than are many contemporary students of the early medieval art of the British Isles, but it must be said that she failed to come to terms with the sculptural importance of Iona, however much she may have continued to champion an Iona provenance for the Book of Kells throughout her long and distinguished career. An apposite English reaction quickly followed, initiated by Sir Alfred Clapham's "Notes on the Origins of Hiberno-Saxon Art", published in 1934, and continued by Sir Thomas Kendrick's 1938 Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900, which stood on the firm foundation of the study of Anglo-Saxon art written by the formidable Professor Gerard Baldwin Brown, The Arts in Early England.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Cecil L. Curle's 1940 article on chronology was the first modern attempt to study the Scottish link between the Irish and Anglo-Saxon

traditions.<sup>5</sup> The publication of the Sutton Hoo material after the Second World War made undeniable the major contribution of pagan Anglo-Saxon art to the development of early medieval Insular art. Doubts initiated or implied by Clapham and Kendrick about the Irish contribution to the art Kendrick called Ultimate La Tène were more stridently stated by the Belgian librarian Francois Masai in his Essai sur les origines de la miniature dite irlandaise.<sup>6</sup> Masai may have been influenced to some extent by E. A. Lowe, who distinguished Irish from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts by what may be called the Tidiness Principle: messy Insular manuscripts are, in Lowe's view, necessarily Irish, while those which are neat and tidy are, by definition, English or Anglo-Saxon.<sup>7</sup> The study of manuscript illumination after the Second World War overshadowed the study of Insular sculpture until Dr. Robert B. K. Stevenson, now retired as Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, published two seminal articles in the 1950s, "Pictish Art" and "The Chronology and Relationships of Some Irish and Scottish Crosses".<sup>8</sup> The original contribution of the Picts to early medieval Insular art was quickly established thereafter, following the discovery of the St. Ninian's Isle treasure in 1959 and the rise to prominence of Dr. Isabel Henderson. Stevenson's observations on the experimental and therefore primary significance of the Iona crosses have now been vindicated and elaborated upon by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, whose 1982 Iona Inventory firmly establishes the historical and archaeological importance of the Iona sculptors and for which Mr. Ian Fisher must take the lion's share of the credit.<sup>9</sup> It now remains to place the early medieval sculpture of Iona and the West Highlands and Islands in its proper art historical context.

✓ In order for the art historian to come to grips with the immediate cultural milieu that gave rise to the pre-Viking art of Iona, he must first realise that Iona, however great its ecclesiastical role within the Old Irish-speaking world and, by extension, in north Britain and western Europe in general, was first and foremost the ecclesiastical centre of the West Highlands and Islands, an area which had achieved political unity under the kingdom of Dál Riata by the end of the seventh century. The Iona crosses must therefore be seen against the background of the earlier sculpture of the region. The continuing art historical tendency, with its condescending attitudes of "quality", to view the Iona crosses solely in relationship to the relief sculpture of Ireland, Pictland and Northumbria, condemns itself to a narrow misunderstanding and will continue to do so until art historians allow themselves the freedom to study the admittedly less refined art of the previous Early Christian sculpture in the British Isles: the inscribed stones published in Professor Macalister's Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum,<sup>10</sup> the incised crosses and cruciform stones whose importance Henry alone among art historians recognised, and the unique art of the Pictish Class I symbol stones that has only received art historical treatment at the hands of Stevenson and Henderson. Nor is it enough to be able to see the cultural and sculptural background to the Iona crosses. One must also become familiar with the effects of the Viking invasions and attempt to discover what became of the influence of Iona within the West Highlands and Islands during the period between c. 800 and 1203, when the Iona monastery ceased to be in any way Celtic and was re-constituted as a Benedictine house.

At the same time, one cannot ignore the interaction between the art of Iona, operating within its own immediate context, and the art of non-Celtic Britain. The modern study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture

entered a new phase in 1965, when Professor Rosemary Cramp delivered her Jarrow Lecture, Early Northumbrian Sculpture.<sup>11</sup> The momentum in the study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture that has arisen since has now led, at long last, to the publication of the first part of the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture.<sup>12</sup> Studies on all fronts are now sufficiently far advanced to permit one to place the sculptural art of Iona and the West Highlands and Islands in the early medieval period both within its own immediate context and within the wider art historical context of early medieval Insular art, with all of its complementary and warring traditions.

The use of the term "early medieval" may require some justification. Since the publication in 1881 of Dr. Joseph Anderson's Scotland in Early Christian Times,<sup>13</sup> it has become customary to distinguish sculpture carved in Scotland between Columba's foundation of the Iona monastery and the reign of David I, and sculpture carved thereafter, as either "Early Christian" or medieval. Indeed, the two terms are those used by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland in their various Inventories. The distinction is historical and, by adoption, archaeological. If, however, one wishes to place the pre-Norman carvings in a wider European art historical context, it is advisable to use the term "early medieval" instead. The use of the term "early medieval" in an art historical context entered the English-speaking world when Professor Ernst Kitzinger published his Early Medieval Art in the British Museum in 1940.<sup>14</sup> Kitzinger disdains any pretence to innovation in this regard and notes that he merely translated the terms haut moyen age and Frühmittelalter already in use on the Continent.<sup>15</sup>

The West Highlands and Islands are separated from the rest of Scotland by the watershed Adomán called Dorsum Britanniae, a Latin translation of the Old Irish Druimalban, the ridge or "spine" of Alba,



a word which originally meant Britain, but later came to mean Scotland alone.<sup>16</sup> Early medieval sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands, carved between Columba's foundation of Iona in the sixth century and the establishment of the Benedictine monastery and the Augustinian nunnery at Iona c. 1200, falls into four definable groups. Pictish symbol stones in the region may all postdate the earliest incised crosses west of Druimalban, but their study introduces the pre-Christian art of the La Tène style, which was redeveloped in the early medieval period. Pictish symbol stones will therefore be considered here first. Second, the earliest Christian sculpture in the area consisted of incised crosses and, possibly, undecorated cruciform stones. Incised crosses may have begun to appear before the end of the sixth century and crosses were probably carved in false relief on stone slabs by c. 700. The earliest Christian sculpture west of Druimalban is related to contemporary sculpture in Ireland and among the Celtic Britons. Pictish symbol stones and early incised crosses are roughly contemporary. The Iona School crosses form the third major group of sculptural monuments in the West Highlands and Islands. The disruption caused by the Viking raids of the late eighth and early ninth century and the subsequent Scandinavian settlement west of Druimalban is reflected by the disparate nature of sculpture carved in the region between c. 800 and c. 1200, which forms the fourth and last major group of early medieval sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands. Pictish symbol stones, incised crosses and the crosses of the Iona School are more comprehensively dealt with here than the sculpture of the fourth group.

The study of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban began with antiquarian observations recorded between the late seventeenth century and c. 1800. Antiquarianism gave way to the rise of modern scholarship in the second half of the nineteenth century, which culminated in the

publication in 1903 of The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland.<sup>17</sup>

The first phase of twentieth-century scholarship ended in 1940 with the publication of Mrs. Curle's article on chronology and Francoise Henry's Irish Art in the Early Christian Period.<sup>18</sup> The work of the antiquaries, the nineteenth-century scholars and twentieth-century scholars until 1940 is outlined below. Twentieth-century scholarship published since 1940 is discussed in detail in the following chapters.

### The Antiquarian Tradition

Travellers with an antiquarian interest began to take notice of early medieval sculpture at Iona in the late seventeenth century, although none of their accounts was published until the beginning of the eighteenth century. William Sacheverell, Governor of the Isle of Man, visited Iona in 1688. Near the west end of the abbey church, he found "three large crosses of black marble, finely engraved, of which one that is high and proportionately big is yet entire, and more than a half of the other two remaining". He also recorded that a Reformation Synod ordered sixty crosses "to be cast into the sea".<sup>19</sup> John Fraser, Dean of the Isles, wrote his "Short Description of I or Iona" in 1693 in answer to a request made to bishop Graham of the Isles by Sir Robert Sibbald, who was preparing a projected Scottish Atlas. Fraser reported that there had once been 360 crosses "which was all destroyed by one provincially assembly holden on the place a little after the reformation", although there were still "two notable ones of a considerable height and excellent work untouched",<sup>20</sup> St. Martin's cross and the late medieval MacLean's cross. Martin Martin was born in Skye and served as a factor or estate manager to MacLeod of Dunvegan. He travelled extensively in the Hebrides in the 1690s but his Description of the Western Islands of Scotland is considerably more



anthropological than antiquarian in outlook, although it does mention two crosses on Iona, MacLean's cross and another Martin calls St. Martin's, now known as St. Matthew's cross.<sup>21</sup>

The greatest of the early antiquaries to travel in the West Highlands and Islands was Edward Lhuyd, the first Assistant Keeper and second Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, who visited Argyll in 1699 while working on his Archaeologica Britannica, a projected work which was to have included a study of the languages, archaeology, natural history and geology of the Celtic-speaking countries, but only the linguistic aspects of his research were published before his death in 1709.<sup>22</sup> Lhuyd published sketches of two early medieval inscribed slabs at Iona in 1700<sup>23</sup> but his original sketches were lost in a fire in a London bookbinder's shop. Copies had already been made, however, for John Anstis, whose two-volume manuscript on stone circles, crosses, funerary monuments, and castles was acquired by Thomas Astle in 1768, before becoming Stowe manuscripts 1023 and 1024 in the British Library.<sup>24</sup> The name of St. Martin's cross at Iona is found for the first time on the copy of Lhuyd's sketch in Stowe 1024.<sup>25</sup>

The Jacobite Rebellions interrupted the flow of antiquarian travellers to the West Highlands and Islands, which resumed in the second half of the eighteenth century. Richard Pococke, bishop of Meath, visited Iona in 1760 but his letters were not published until 1887.<sup>26</sup> The eminent naturalist Thomas Pennant described "a fine cross, fourteen feet high" in the abbey "church yard" on Iona in his account of the tour of the region he made in 1772.<sup>27</sup> A few years later, Samuel Johnson noted that two of the crosses on Iona "bear the names of St. John and St. Matthew".<sup>28</sup> Dr. Thomas Garnett described two crosses in front of the abbey church in 1800: "one called St. Martin's, which is very elegant and formed of one piece of red granite, fourteen

feet high; the other called St. John's cross is much broken".<sup>29</sup>

Antiquarians were drawn to lapidary inscriptions and the Iona crosses. Interest in incised crosses and Pictish symbol stones in the West Highlands and Islands did not develop until the second half of the nineteenth century.

### The Development of Modern Scholarship

The development of the systematic recording of early medieval sculpture in Scotland began with the publication in 1848 of Patrick Chalmers' The Ancient Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus, which was followed in 1850 by H. D. Graham's Antiquities of Iona and in 1856 by the first volume of John Stuart's Sculptured Stones of Scotland.<sup>30</sup> The plates of Graham's book illustrate late medieval monuments for the most part, although several early medieval burial slabs are included, as well as one side of both St. Martin's cross and St. Matthew's, which Graham called St. John's cross.<sup>31</sup> The first volume of Sculptured Stones of Scotland included only one West Highland monument, the cross shaft on the island of Eilean Mór in the Sound of Jura.<sup>32</sup>

The nineteenth century also saw the rise of a critical approach to early medieval sculpture. Bishop William Reeves of Meath dismissed accounts of the wholesale destruction of crosses on Iona at the Reformation because some were "left standing" and concluded that "there probably never were more than two dozen real crosses standing at any one time".<sup>33</sup> Reeves also noted various Iona place names that imply the previous presence of crosses and remarked that "the socket of a cross is said to have been observed" atop Tor Abb, the rocky outcrop opposite the west front of the abbey church.<sup>34</sup>

The relationship between the sculpture of the West Highlands and

Islands, Pictland and Ireland began to be explored in the nineteenth century. Thomas Muir thought that the Kildalton cross in Islay and St. Martin's cross at Iona were the only ringed crosses "seemingly known to exist in Scotland" and thus "it may appear doubtful whether the type was a common one in earlier times".<sup>35</sup> In the second volume of Sculptured Stones of Scotland, published in 1867, Stuart described the rings on Kildalton and St. Martin's as an "Irish feature", compared the Kildalton cross to the South cross at Clornacnoise and found the Keills cross in Knapdale to be "rather of an Irish type".<sup>36</sup> In Stuart's view the Temptation scene on St. Matthew's cross at Iona is more closely related to Irish versions on crosses at Kells and Moone than to "the Scotch example on the stone at Farnell", although the decorative features of St. Matthew's cross "partake of the character of those of the more ancient monuments on the east coast" of Scotland.<sup>37</sup> Stuart also related the "style of ornament" on the early medieval Eilean Mór cross shaft to "that of the Pillars on the east coast".<sup>38</sup> In general, Stuart linked West Highland and Irish crosses and thought that "the date of the crosses is probably two centuries later than those of Pictland".<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that the drawings in Sculptured Stones of Scotland are frequently incorrect in detail. The Keills cross, for example, is shown with projecting bosses where it has none.<sup>40</sup>

The nineteenth century also saw the publication of monographs on sculpture found in West Highland mainland districts and Hebridean islands other than Iona. Captain T. P. White of the Royal Engineers published his Archaeological Sketches in Scotland, District of Kintyre in 1873 and his Archaeological Sketches in Scotland, Knapdale and Gigha in 1875, while he was attached to the Ordnance Survey in Glasgow.<sup>41</sup> White included drawings of incised crosses in both of his books but saw his textual task as descriptive and did not venture into the problems

of dating dealt with by Stuart, although White's drawings are more accurate than those published in Sculptured Stones of Scotland.

Robert C. Graham's Carved Stones of Islay marks the first systematic attempt to catalogue and publish sculptured stones in the West Highlands and Islands.<sup>42</sup> Graham listed every stone known to him and included a brief description, even when he provided no accompanying photograph. Graham collaborated with John Romilly Allen, who was then involved with the production of The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland.

### The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland

In 1890, the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland made its Gunning Fellowship available to John Romilly Allen for three years, in order to undertake the fieldwork necessary to produce a survey of Early Christian monuments in Scotland by means of photographs, rubbings, drawings and verbal descriptions. At the same time, the Council decided to devote one year of the Society's annual Rhind Lectures to the general results of that survey and appointed Dr. Joseph Anderson, the Society's Assistant Secretary and Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, to deliver those lectures in 1892.<sup>43</sup>

Romilly Allen published a preliminary list of sculptured stones, followed by reports on stones north of the River Dee, south of the River Dee, and two subsequent reports on the necessary photographs in the Society's Proceedings.<sup>44</sup> He discovered, however, that a third part of the survey would be required, in addition to the two proposed by the Society's Council. In order to avoid constant repetition in the descriptive catalogue of monuments, Romilly Allen also prepared tables on the distribution of Pictish symbols and the occurrence of the various types of figure representations, as well as diagrams of the construction of interlace, key patterns and spiral ornament.<sup>45</sup>

He had already published analyses of interlace, spirals and key patterns found on Scottish monuments, before the Society's Council decided on the complete survey,<sup>46</sup> and was able to use his earlier work to advantage. The results of the combined efforts of Allen and Anderson were published as The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland in 1903 and consisted of three parts: Anderson's Rhind Lectures for 1892, Allen's comprehensive study of symbols and ornament and the survey of individual monuments. The whole remains indispensable to the study of early medieval sculpture in Scotland and indeed in all of the British Isles.

The classification system devised by Anderson and Romilly Allen is still used when discussing Pictish sculpture, but has little bearing on early medieval sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands. Anderson observed that "inscriptions are of exceptional occurrence on the Scottish monuments, and therefore fail to afford a means of general classification",<sup>47</sup> so other criteria had to be found to organise the evidence collected by Romilly Allen. The symbols unique to Pictish art provided the key to the three classes of monuments defined by Anderson and Allen. Class I consists of undressed slabs decorated with incised symbols. Dressed rectangular slabs featuring crosses and symbols carved in relief belong to Class II. Monuments with "Celtic" ornament carved in relief which lack Pictish symbols, including upright and recumbent slabs, free-standing crosses, stone coffins, and altar tombs, are assigned to Class III.<sup>48</sup> Romilly Allen acknowledged the inadequacy of the classification system when he appended a list of "Stones with Crosses But No Ornament" to his survey of monuments in Argyll.<sup>49</sup> It has now become customary to restrict Class III to relief cross slabs in Pictland which have no Pictish symbols.

Romilly Allen also divided Scotland into six geographical areas for statistical purposes.<sup>50</sup> In doing so, however, he separated the

northern and southern parts of the West Highlands and Islands. The Outer Hebrides, Wester Ross and western Inverness-shire, an area which includes Skye and the Small Isles, were assigned to the Northern Section. Bute and Argyll, including the Hebrides south of Ardnamurchan, comprised the Western Section. Romilly Allen's division of the West Highlands and Islands belies the political hegemony that Dál Riata had achieved by c. 700, although the northern area probably remained culturally heterogeneous for centuries, both before and after the first Viking settlements. Nonetheless, the northern part of the West Highlands and Islands was troubled by Gaelic incursions in the seventh century and the Pictish symbol stones west of Druimalban present some special problems which are discussed in the following chapter. In view of Romilly Allen's statistics, Joseph Anderson remarked that the area of "least development" of Early Christian monuments in Scotland "lies west of the range of Druimalban, and includes the region first colonised from Ireland and most affected by the Irish",<sup>51</sup> but Romilly Allen's statistics are now long out of date. The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland includes only two of the eight Pictish symbol stones found west of Druimalban and most of the incised crosses have been published since 1903. A number of early medieval sculptures carved in the West Highlands and Islands after c. 800 have also come to light since Anderson's and Allen's time. Additions to the catalogue of monuments west of Druimalban have since been published in the Inventories of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and in notes and articles in archaeological journals, primarily in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, but a cohesive study of the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands is still lacking. One hopes that this thesis will be a contribution to making up the deficiency.



## Twentieth-Century Scholarship to 1940

The work of twentieth-century scholars on early medieval Insular sculpture was primarily concerned with relief sculpture until Francoise Henry turned her attention to incised crosses in Ireland and Mrs. Curle proposed a revision of Anderson's and Allen's chronology. Professor R. A. S. Macalister, who published an inventory of stone carvings on Iona in 1914,<sup>52</sup> reconstructed St. John's cross in 1927. Macalister agreed with Joseph Anderson that the sculptured stones of the Iona School are related to Irish high crosses but are characterised by a distinctive preference for ornament at the expense of figure sculpture.<sup>53</sup> Anderson tentatively dated Class III monuments to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but Macalister dated St. John's cross to the tenth or eleventh century "on Irish analogies", although he saw a closer link between the Iona crosses and Pictish relief sculpture.<sup>54</sup> The border of the three lower panels on the west face of St. John's cross are decorated with "interlacing of almost painful minuteness", a feature "especially characteristic of the Scottish sculptured stones", which "sharply differentiates them from those of Ireland".<sup>55</sup> Macalister explained the close relationship between the Iona crosses and Pictish sculpture by making both dependent on Irish illuminated manuscripts, in contrast to Romilly Allen, who wrote that "the subordination of ornament to figure subjects on the Irish crosses shows that they are further removed from the manuscripts than the Welsh, Cornish and Scottish crosses, and therefore later in date".<sup>56</sup> W. G. Collingwood proposed a twelfth-century date for the Iona crosses, the Kildalton cross in Islay and the Keills cross in Knapdale, but thought that their stylistic origins derived from Northumbria, only to be "transformed by Gaelic feeling".<sup>57</sup> Joseph Anderson had previously discussed the similarities between the Keills, Kildalton and Iona crosses.<sup>58</sup>

✓ Professor Arthur Kingsley Porter dated the Iona crosses earlier than had Macalister and Collingwood and attempted to place them in sequence in The Crosses and Culture of Ireland, published in 1931.

T. S. Muir and Joseph Anderson had discussed the Virgin and Child scenes on St. Martin's and St. Oran's crosses at Iona and the Kildalton cross in Islay,<sup>59</sup> but Kingsley Porter was the first to relate the Virgin and Child iconography of Iona School sculpture to St. Cuthbert's coffin and the Book of Kells, a manuscript which Porter dated to the mid-eighth century.<sup>60</sup> Both Kildalton and St. Martin's cross feature the Virgin and Child between two angels, but Kildalton provides the closest parallel to the "disconcerting" St. John's Cross, which was "generally admitted" to be the earliest of the Iona crosses. Kingsley Porter therefore dated St. John's and Kildalton to the early ninth century, "or even in the eighth".<sup>61</sup> He compared the style of St. Martin's cross to the North cross at Castledermot and dated both to the "second quarter or middle of the ninth century".<sup>62</sup> He related the Adam and Eve iconography of St. Matthew's cross at Iona to the Tihilly cross in County Offaly, which "hardly seems earlier than the tenth century" and argued that sculptured crosses may have been erected at Iona "even during the difficult times of the Danish invasions".<sup>63</sup> Kingsley Porter also alluded to Iona's function as an artistic crossroads when he wrote that "the idea of applying figure sculpture to a high cross probably originated in Northumbria, and was thence imported into Ireland, perhaps by way of Iona",<sup>64</sup> a suggestion which ignores the possibility that figures in relief may have appeared in Pictland before they did so at Iona. We may be sure, however, that Romilly Allen was thinking of Pictland when he suggested that Early Christian sculpture in the British Isles began in Northumbria and subsequently developed in Scotland before its rise in Ireland.<sup>65</sup>



Dr. Francoise Henry first referred to the Iona and Kildalton crosses in La sculpture irlandaise, published in 1933. Her attitude towards them was to change in subsequent publications, as her interests expanded from the study of Irish sculpture to the consideration of other media as well. One suspects that the modification of Henry's thinking about the Iona and Kildalton crosses resulted from her firm conviction that the Book of Kells was made at Iona and is therefore an example of Irish art. In La sculpture irlandaise she found the Hebridean crosses to be of little use in tracing the sources of the iconography and ornamentation of Irish crosses. The Virgin and Child adored by angels, found at Iona and Kildalton, is a "thème essentiellement northumbrien et étranger à l'art irlandais". Daniel in the Lions' Den and the Sacrifice of Abraham are found at Iona and Kildalton, but the two themes are "si généraux que leur présence ne prouve rien".<sup>66</sup> By 1933, Henry had already decided that the models for the Christian iconography of Irish crosses came directly from the Continent or the east,<sup>67</sup> silently implying that the iconography of the Hebridean crosses must have derived from the same sources or from Ireland itself. She did, however, notice similarities between the Celtic spirals on the South cross at Clonmacnoise, the Kells Tower cross, St. John's cross at Iona, the Kildalton cross, and the Pictish cross slab at Nigg and remarked that the oldest of the Irish crosses with spirals in relief recall Nigg and the Iona crosses.<sup>68</sup> In La sculpture irlandaise, Nigg, the Iona crosses and Kildalton are monuments écossais and the Iona and Kildalton crosses are croix écossaises.

Henry's Irish Art in the Early Christian Period was published in 1940. The second edition of 1947 is identical to it, except for minor corrections. By 1940, Henry's perception of the croix écossaises of La sculpture irlandaise had undergone a transformation. St. John's

✓ cross and the Kildalton cross now "have exactly the same proportions as the other Irish crosses", although their "bold modelling" appears on other "Scottish monuments", the Nigg slab and the St. Andrews Sarcophagus.<sup>69</sup> Joseph Anderson had already discussed the similarities between the bosses and relief spirals on the Nigg, St. Andrews, Iona and Kildalton monuments, all of which Henry dated to the second half of the eighth century.<sup>70</sup> Scenes of Daniel in the Lions' Den and David playing the harp, found on St. Martin's cross at Iona, or the Sacrifice of Abraham and Cain Killing Abel, carved on the Kildalton cross, provided "nothing new" for Henry in the context of Irish sculpture, but the Virgin and Child is "a rather striking group to find at the centre of an Irish cross".<sup>71</sup> The Iona and Kildalton crosses had become culturally Irish by 1940, although they remained geographically Scottish.

Henry first related the Iona crosses to the Book of Kells in Irish Art in the Early Christian Period. By 1940, she had distinguished the hands of several different artists in the Book of Kells and assigned them various names. One of these, whom she dubbed the Goldsmith, produced the manuscript's only carpet page, fol. 33R, the Chi-Rho monogram on fol. 34R and the Initial pages of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, fols. 29R, 130R and 292R.<sup>72</sup> Henry found the Goldsmith's treatment of spirals "very peculiar": they appear "as a series of discs often grouped inside circles", their centres are elaborately decorated and interlace is occasionally used to connect the different spirals. The use of interlace in conjunction with spirals is "characteristic of the end of the eighth century" and the arrangement of spirals as discs within circles "suggests a close comparison with the crosses of Iona".<sup>73</sup> In contrast to the flat spirals carved on early Irish high crosses, the Iona crosses have panels "covered with a series of bulbous protruberances

connected by a few lines and often arranged in discs". Henry decided that "this new interpretation of the curvilinear motive" first appeared in Scotland, "together with a feeling for strong relief, in the second half of the eighth century", although she made no attempt to locate the origins of the "new interpretation" in either Pictland or Iona.<sup>74</sup> She also drew a famous comparison between the Celtic spirals on the Chi-Rho page in the Book of Kells and those on the west face of the shaft of St. John's cross at Iona.<sup>75</sup>

Henry turned her attention to the earlier sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands in Irish Art in the Early Christian Period. The two incised Chi-Rhos in Raasay, which Henry described as the "Chi-Rho slabs of Skye" and the marigold stone at Cladh a' Bhile in Argyll demonstrated to Henry that the style of the early Irish Christian monuments, the incised crosses and marigolds found at Inishkea North and South, Reask and Ballyvourney "had spread through the Irish monasteries abroad".<sup>76</sup> Indeed, "the monuments of the West of Scotland are hardly to be separated from those of Ireland" during this period, when there was a "close relation between the monuments of Wales, Ireland and Scotland".<sup>77</sup> The circumscribed crosses, Chi-Rhos and marigolds found in the Celtic west are more precisely datable to the second half of the seventh century, in view of the similarity between the arcs of which they are composed and those used to describe the cross on the Whithorn pillar in Galloway, whose inscription mentions the apostle Peter and was therefore "obviously erected a short time after the synod of Whitby".<sup>78</sup>

In a major article published in 1940, Mrs. Cecil L. Curle presented a modification of the chronology proposed by Joseph Anderson and Romilly Allen and discussed some of the Pictish symbol stones and incised Christian monuments in the West Highlands and Islands, as well as the Iona School crosses and other relief sculptures west of Druimalban.

In view of Adomnán's account of Columba's conversion in Skye of Artbrannan, who required an interpreter and was apparently a Pict, and the occurrence of Pictish symbol stones in Skye and the Outer Isles, Mrs. Curle concluded that Skye and "the Hebrides" were Pictish during Columba's lifetime.<sup>79</sup> She thought that the cross incised on the symbol stone on the island of Pabbay in the Outer Hebrides was a later addition to the symbols on the stone, but the cross of arcs on the Raasay symbol stone "has not only been carved at the same time as the symbol, but it is of a very distinctive type", datable to "about the end of the seventh century", owing to its similarity to the cross on the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn.<sup>80</sup> The juxtaposition of cross and symbol on the Raasay stone indicates that "the symbol stones were still in use at the coming of Christianity".<sup>81</sup> Curle suggested that the incised Pictish Boar in the Dalriadic fort at Dunadd "might be explained as the work of a raiding party of victorious Picts".<sup>82</sup> She noted that the "simplest form of Latin cross" is incised on slabs on Eileach an Naoimh and Tíree, but "between the fifth and seventh century it is impossible to date any monuments exactly".<sup>83</sup>

✓ Curle placed the Iona crosses in an Irish context, as had Henry, although Curle also recognised the relationship between the Iona crosses and Pictish relief sculpture at Nigg and St. Andrews. Curle echoed Henry in describing the iconography of the Iona crosses as "purely Irish", except for the Virgin and Child motif, and accepted Henry's suggestion that some of the three-dimensional spirals of the Iona School "are practically identical, both in composition and in the type of spiral, with parts of the Chi-Rho page in the Book of Kells".<sup>84</sup> Curle also found that "traces of this school of carving exist elsewhere in the west", in the Kildalton cross and the Keills cross in Knapdale, which has "the short arms of St. Martin's cross, but without the ring joining

them".<sup>85</sup> In an earlier article published under her maiden name of Mowbray, Curle had related the "raised bosses and technique of sculpture in the round" of the Iona crosses to the Nigg slab and the St. Andrews Sarcophagus, although she found it impossible to decide "whether there was direct contact between" Nigg and St. Andrews, "or whether the contact came by way of Iona".<sup>86</sup> In 1940, she related the spirals and raised bosses framed by serpents on the Nigg, St. Andrews and Iona monuments to the decoration of two D-shaped "Irish bronze objects in the Musée des Antiquités Nationales" at St. Germain-en-Laye,<sup>87</sup> a comparison Henry had not made. Curle dated the Iona crosses before 806, when the Iona monks "took refuge at Kells and there built a new monastery" and argued that, by the mid-ninth century, "the new kingdom of Scotland was cut off from the centres of culture of the Scots - Iona and Ireland - and consequently the quality of its art was very poor", implying that earlier Pictish sculpture had owed more to Iona and Ireland than either had owed to Pictland.<sup>88</sup>

Curle was inclined to an early date for two other early medieval relief sculptures in Argyll. She related the Kilmartin cross to the Carndonagh pillars in Ireland and dated it to the seventh century.<sup>89</sup> She also considered a late seventh-century date for "the only cross-slab of a developed type in the west of Scotland", at Ardchattan Priory on Loch Etive, although she noted that its "human figure merging into interlace is found in Irish manuscripts of the eighth century, and the whole slab bears a general resemblance to the post-Viking monuments of the Isle of Man".<sup>90</sup>

### Summary

The curiosity of antiquarian travellers gave way to a more scholarly approach in the second half of the nineteenth century, which culminated

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in turn in The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland. The catalogue of early medieval sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands initiated by Romilly Allen's compilation was continued by the publication of individual stones in archaeological journals. Scholarly investigation, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century, had produced a few conclusions by 1940. Pictish symbol stones west of Druimalban were of interest primarily because they showed that the Picts had once lived in the area, although no attempt had yet been made to relate the Pictish presence in the west, implied by the symbol stones, to the history of Dál Riata or the Pictish kingdom after the lifetime of Columba, nor had the western symbol stones been placed in a sequential relationship to the bulk of Pictish Class I stones east of Druimalban. Incised Early Christian monuments were seen as a reflection of the activities of Irish monasticism. The importance of the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn was recognised, but it continued to be viewed in a "Celtic" context, which obscured the distinction between Britons and Gaels. The possibility that the earliest Christian sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands might indicate direct contact with the Continent had not yet been explored. The crosses of the Iona School were fundamentally Irish, despite the similarity of their decoration to that of certain Pictish relief sculptures. Early medieval sculpture carved in the West Highlands and Islands after the initial Viking onslaught excited little interest.

Significant advances have been made in the study of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban since 1940, particularly in the case of the Iona School, but it continues to be seen as an extension of either Irish or Pictish art. The unique cultural position of the West Highlands and Islands, an area politically unified within the kingdom of Dál Riata by c. 700, is reflected in its early medieval sculpture, but the sculpture



must be perceived within the context of its own cultural milieu and only then studied in relationship to the contemporary art of the rest of the British Isles and the Continent of Europe. It is not the writer's intention to produce a complete catalogue of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban. To do so would be to compete with the function of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. In recent years, the Royal Commission's Inventories have grappled with some of the major archaeological and art historical issues raised by the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands, but it is outside the province of the Royal Commission to extend their investigation to the detailed study of the cultural context in which that sculpture emerged.

In order to place early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban in its proper cultural context, everything must become grist for the art historian's mill. Archaeologists and historians of the period have made themselves familiar with the work of early medieval art historians and art historians should return the compliment. Art historians must become as familiar as archaeologists and historians with the archaeological record, saints' Lives, the Irish annals and other historical source material, if they wish to gain a deeper understanding of early medieval Insular art. Some art historians may not be used to the interpretation of the wealth of historical, literary, genealogical and place name evidence available, but it is hoped that the relevance of such information to the study of the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands will eventually become apparent in the following pages.

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. The term "Gaelic" is used here to include the Old and Middle Irish-speaking inhabitants of both Ireland and the West Highlands and Islands in the early medieval period, from the late sixth century to c. 1200 A.D.
2. Porter, Arthur Kingsley, The Crosses and Culture of Ireland, 1931, reprint New York 1979.
3. Henry, Françoise, La sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, Paris 1933.
4. Clapham, A. W., 'Notes on the Origins of Hiberno-Saxon Art', Antiquity 8, 1934, 43-57; Kendrick, T. D., Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900, London 1938; Brown, Gerard Baldwin, The Arts in Early England, 7 vols., London 1903-1937.
5. Curle, Cecil L., 'The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland', Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 74, 1939-1940, 60-116.
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## II. PICTISH SYMBOL STONES WEST OF DRUIMALBAN

Eight stones in the West Highlands and Islands display incised Pictish symbols or animals. Seven of them, including two dressed slabs, were originally erected as upright stones. The eighth is a natural rock formation near the highest crest of the hill of Dunadd, which rises abruptly above the level valley of the River Add and was once a fortified capital of Scottish Dál Riata. Six of the eight feature only incised symbols or animals and belong to Pictish Class I. The seventh, on the island of Pabbay, south of Barra in the Outer Hebrides, also bears an incised cross but probably pertains to Class I as well since the cross does not appear to have been carved at the same time as the symbols on the stone. The eighth example, now near Raasay House, exemplifies the transition between Pictish Class I and II. A dressed slab, its decoration consists of two incised Pictish symbols and an incised Chi-Rho monogram cross, which was obviously included in the original design for the stone. Additional evidence, other than symbol stones, for a period of Pictish occupation west of Druimalban, provided by archaeology, place-names and such contemporary sources as Adomnán's Life of Columba and the Irish Annals, is considered here first. There follows a discussion of the stylistic origins and the dating of Pictish Class I, the typology of the symbol stones found in the West Highlands and Islands and the implications of the typology and the presence of the eight Pictish symbol stones in the west.

### Archaeological Evidence

In a recent paper Professor Leslie Alcock has remarked the lack of "decisive evidence" of a developed Pictish culture in the West Highlands and Islands, prior to the "Scottish colonization- whenever that occurred",

and has dubbed the inhabitants of the region "Peripheral Picts" during the period immediately preceding Scottish colonization, as they "are likely to have borne a diluted Pictish or Proto-Pictish culture".<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that the word "culture" has a rather more restricted meaning for archaeologists than it does when used by historians and art historians. Alcock offers three possible explanations for the paucity of symbol stones west of Druimalban: first, the population may have become "scanty" by the historical period: second, the influence of the "Heartland Picts of the eastern lowlands" may have been quite weak; and third, Old-Irish speaking incomers may already have infiltrated the area and "suppressed" the indigenous Pictish culture prior to the emergence of the symbol stone "as a distinctive Pictish monument, whenever that might be".<sup>2</sup>

The interpretation of the excavations of several relevant sites in the Outer Hebrides remains ambiguous at present, but Iain Crawford, the excavator of one such site, Coileagan an Udail in North Uist, has observed that the Scots<sup>of</sup> Dál Riata are themselves "still archaeologically unidentified".<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, the cellular houses of the pre-Norse village of Phase XI at Udal North are of the same type as those at Buckquoy in Orkney, which their excavator, Dr. Anna Ritchie, identifies as examples of a distinctive type of presumably Pictish architecture.<sup>4</sup> Ritchie relates the Buckquoy houses to post-broch constructions at Yarrows in Caithness<sup>5</sup> and Alcock notes that the Buckquoy and Udal houses recall the bi-cellular souterrain-period houses at Carlungie, Angus, in the Pictish "heartland".<sup>6</sup> Crawford's dating of Phase XI at Udal North between the seventh and ninth century is supported by a radio-carbon date in the mid-seventh century.<sup>7</sup> James Graham-Campbell sees Celtic, Norse and Anglo-Saxon features in the decoration of a probably ninth-century bronze strap-end found outside the door of one of

the Phase XI houses at the Udal, which is of no help in determining where it might have been made, "since the requisite artistic environment existed throughout the west from the Hebrides to Ireland and the Isle of Man".<sup>8</sup> Crawford characterises Phase XI at the Udal as a "Celtic farming settlement" with possible Irish, Pictish or "purely indigenous" characteristics.<sup>9</sup> He has, in fact, seized upon the Irish associations implied by the bronze strap-end and a gilt pin-head found in Phase XI as evidence that what the Vikings found on arriving in the Outer Hebrides was a "distribution of Gaelic-speaking Scottish settlement, at least substantial and much of it of relatively recent Irish origin or affinity", which is likely, but it is a rather strong conclusion to make from the presence of two metalwork objects and one that does not sufficiently account for the architectural tradition that lies behind the houses in or near where those two objects were found.

The excavator of other sites in the Outer Isles also detected Irish influence in various finds. Alison Young found composite bone combs in the galleried dun in Barra, Dun Cuier, which may be related to material found at Ballinderry and Lagore in Ireland,<sup>10</sup> although a similar comb was also found in the Pictish levels of the Brough of Birsay, Orkney.<sup>11</sup> Young thought a stone mould from Dun Cuier was "part of the matrix for a penannular brooch with expanded terminals",<sup>12</sup> but it is more likely to be related to Irish glass stud moulds of the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>13</sup> Young also came across a bronze pin while excavating a wheelhouse at A' Cheardach Mhór in South Uist, which she dated by Irish associations to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>14</sup> The Irish influences detected by excavators in finds from western or "peripheral" Pictish sites tell us more of the trade contacts available to the inhabitants than of the inhabitants themselves and may all date to the period when political control of the Pictish territory west of



Druimalban had passed to Dál Riata.

Direct cultural contact between the pre-Norse or even pre-Scottish inhabitants and those of Alcock's "heartland" Picts may have been infrequent but we need not assume that this implies a drastically lower level of material culture. The excavation of another site on the Drimore Machair in South Uist, the wheelhouse of A' Cheardach Bheag, yielded a Romano-British ploughshare, the earliest one so far found north of the Forth-Clyde line.<sup>15</sup> It is likely to have been an import, as are the probable Irish objects found at the Udal, A' Cheardach Mhór and Dun Cuier, implying substantial trade contacts for several centuries at least before the Vikings' arrival, however difficult or intermittent communication with the Pictish "heartland" may have been. The production of pottery among the western or "peripheral" Picts appears to have been fairly common and marks an indigenous practice of long standing distinct from the "heartland" Picts, who occasionally imported pottery, but do not appear to have produced it.<sup>16</sup> Chamber A in the Dun Carloway broch in Lewis, for example, seems to have been a factory in the fifth to seventh century period, producing pottery similar to that found at Dun Cuier and A' Cheardach Mhór.<sup>17</sup>

Another pertinent find, a bone knife handle with a Pictish ogham inscription, was found at the Bac Mhic Chonnain site on Vallay Island off North Uist, which was excavated by Erskine Beveridge and published posthumously from his notes by Graham Callander.<sup>18</sup> Owing to the circumstances of its publication, it is now impossible to discover the context in which the knife handle was found.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Oliver Padel, whose M.Litt thesis on Pictish oghams is the finest study of the subject, reads the inscription as

M..QUN<sup>T</sup>C<sup>A</sup>EN<sup>U</sup>)..T.

The first letter might be H but is probably M.<sup>20</sup> The first four letters



may thus have incorporated some form, possibly maqq, of Irish mac, a term known to have been used in Pictish nomenclature.<sup>21</sup> The inscription is Pictish, according to Padel, who would date it between the seventh and ninth centuries. The form of the vowels is of an Irish type, as is the case with the presumably early Links of Keiss Bay ogham inscription.<sup>22</sup> Neither Padel nor Professor Jackson believes the presence of a Pictish chattel inscription in North Uist can be used to argue for any considerable Pictish occupation of the Outer Hebrides, as such objects are easily carried, lost or stolen.<sup>23</sup>

Contact between the Picts on either side of Druimalban is, however, implied by an undecorated, openwork escutcheon found with the remains of a bronze hanging-bowl in a kitchen-midden at Eilean Tioram Castle on the coast of Moidart, which is similar to a fragmentary escutcheon on a hanging-bowl from Tummel Bridge in Perthshire.<sup>24</sup> The two "laterally opposed palmettes" of the Eilean Tioram escutcheon are replaced by four peltas or "openwork palmettes" in the Tummel Bridge example.<sup>25</sup> A mould found during excavations at Craig Phadrig near Inverness would have produced an openwork escutcheon with the same design as the Eilean Tioram example: two "laterally opposed palmettes", a central openwork lozenge, a vertical line separating the escutcheon into two equal parts, and two openwork peltas.<sup>26</sup> Alcock accepts a date between the fifth and the seventh century for the Craig Phadrig mould but is generally inclined to dismiss the implications of "trinkets" and admonishes us to "approach with caution the attribution of certain classes of metalwork to particular named peoples"<sup>27</sup> but the Craig Phadrig mould clearly indicates that undecorated openwork escutcheons were produced in Pictland.<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Fowler and David Longley date undecorated openwork escutcheons to the fifth century,<sup>29</sup> a date supported by the weak, typologically early hammered-down rim-sections of the Eilean Tioram and Tummel Bridge

bowls.<sup>30</sup> The Baginton hanging-bowl from Warwickshire, however, has a similar rim-section but its openwork escutcheon, which is in the same form as the Eilean Tioram escutcheon and the Craig Phadrig mould, bears enamel decoration,<sup>31</sup> in contrast to the plain Pictish escutcheons, which Stevenson, arguing that "regression in places cannot be ruled out", dates to the seventh century, a date supported by Graham-Campbell.<sup>32</sup>

Isabel Henderson also links the Craig Phadrig mould to the Eilean Tioram escutcheon found in Moidart, "an area which would have been Pictish throughout the period of hanging-bowls"<sup>33</sup> given the fifth to seventh century date range proposed for the Eilean Tioram hanging-bowl.

The chance find of a single Pictish hanging-bowl in Moidart would, however, have to be relegated to the role of an almost irrelevant curiosity were it not for the additional associations provided by its zoomorphic hook.<sup>34</sup> The Tummel Bridge escutcheon hook does not survive, nor does the Craig Phadrig mould include the hook, although it does make provision for the same sort of "muzzle-shaped" hook attachment as that on the Eilean Tioram bowl, which is also found with openwork escutcheons found south of the Humber in Wiltshire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, and Warwickshire.<sup>35</sup> Stevenson and Lloyd Laing relate the zoomorphic Eilean Tioram escutcheon hook to the animal heads on a swivel ring from A' Chrois, Tiree and another from the tidal island of Vallay on the north coast of North Uist.<sup>36</sup> Dr. Graham-Campbell accepts Stevenson's seventh century date for the A' Chrois swivel-ring but is not convinced that it is Pictish.<sup>37</sup> Stevenson's seventh century date for the type depends, in part, on similarities to the animal-headed hooks on the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl, but Dr. Bruce-Mitford has now established that the naturalism of these is unique in late Celtic metalwork, although he would relate the "heavy modelling" of the boars' heads beneath the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl escutcheons to the animal heads on the

A' Chrois and Vallay swivel-rings, as well as to the zoomorphic Eilean Tioram escutcheon hook, all of which he accepts as Pictish.<sup>38</sup>

Bruce-Mitford would now date the large Sutton Hoo bowl, "the product of a royal Celtic workshop" in one of the British kingdoms in north or west Britain, to c. 600 or slightly later.<sup>39</sup> Plain Pictish openwork escutcheons, including Eilean Tioram, are related to enamelled escutcheons on hanging-bowls found in England, which have rim-sections similar to those of the Eilean Tioram and Tummel Bridge bowls;<sup>40</sup> and the additional links, provided by zoomorphic attachments, between the Eilean Tioram bowl, the Craig Phadrig mould and the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl, as well as metalwork of a probably seventh-century type found in the Hebrides, suggest that the Picts west of Druimalban enjoyed contact both with their Pictish brethren to the east and with the P-Celtic population of the rest of Britain.

#### Place-Name Evidence

Evidence for a period of P-Celtic, probably Pictish occupation west of Druimalban is provided by place-names beginning in Pit- and those including Brittonic elements such as aber and carden. Professor Jackson's conclusion, reached in his masterly study of the Pictish language, that the inhabitants of Pictland in the early historical period spoke both an early form of Gallo-Brittonic and an older Non-Indo European language, has been generally accepted by art historians and archaeologists, but should now be qualified in light of more recent reservations expressed by Dr. W. H. F. Nicolaisen.<sup>41</sup> Ptolemy's map provides the earliest datable evidence for place-names in Pictland but many of the place-names studied by onomasticians have survived, in one form or another, into the modern period.

Place-names prefixed Pit- are found in Scotland but in no other

Celtic areas. Jackson has established that pit, earlier pett, is related to Welsh peth ("thing"), Breton pez ("piece") and the Gaulish \*petia, inferred by the Latin term petia terrae ("parcel of land").<sup>42</sup> As such, its origins are P-Celtic, that is, it belongs to the group of Celtic languages that included the Gaulish of pre-Roman Gaul and the later Brittonic languages of Britain and Brittany, which are distinguished from Q-Celtic or Goidelic languages, a group comprising Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx, by the replacement of the older Indo-European qu with the p found in the Brittonic group.<sup>43</sup> The lack of Pit- place-names south of the Antonine Wall suggests that pett was a word used by a "P-Celtic people who were distinct from the Brittonic tribes south of the wall" and who had Gaulish connections.<sup>44</sup> Whittington and Soulsby have established that Pit- names were applied to units of well-drained farmland in Pictland.<sup>45</sup> Professor W. J. Watson discovered three Pit- names west of Druimalban: Pitalmit and Pitchalman in Glenelg and Pitnean, already obsolete in Watson's day, in Lochcarron.<sup>46</sup> Many Pit- place-names, such as Pitchalman, end in an element that is Goidelic in origin. Chalmain is the genitive form of Old Irish Colmán, a male personal name. Nicolaisen has argued repeatedly that the combination of Pictish Pit- with Gaelic suffixes in place-names came about during a presumably bilingual period in the ninth and tenth centuries,<sup>47</sup> but Whittington notes that "the pit element could have survived while the land division disappeared",<sup>48</sup> presumably at a time when Pictish culture was itself disappearing. Pit- names in Glenelg and Lochcarron could therefore have had an early origin, dating to a period of Pictish hegemony west of Druimalban and, in Whittington's view, "may well have had a greater spread, as did the Picts" in the West Highlands and Islands.<sup>49</sup> There are thus two possible explanations for the three Pit- names west of Druimalban: either they belong to the ninth and tenth centuries,

following Nicolaisen, or they may be the remnant of a system well established, following Whittington, for several centuries before any possible bilingual period of Pictish decline. Whittington's point, especially, has much to commend it and has recently been accepted by Dr. Trevor Watkins, who observes that the three western Pit- place-names "may be the relic of an early land assessment period which was swamped out", rather than a late place-name spread beyond the original distribution area.<sup>50</sup> There are no Pit- names in either the Northern or the Western Isles, but symbol stones are found in both and any Pictish place-name evidence might well have been destroyed as a result of Norse settlement.<sup>51</sup>

Brittonic aber, "confluence" or "estuary", is found in place-names throughout the P-Celtic areas of Britain, including Pictland and its western province. It is included in the name of Lochaber, the district at the head of Loch Linnhe, as well as in Applecross,<sup>52</sup> which is called Apor Croosan in 673 and Apur Chroson in 722 in the Annals of Ulster.<sup>53</sup>

Nicolaisen<sup>54</sup> has pointed out that place-names including Brittonic pren ("tree") are, like names with aber, found both north and south of the Forth-Clyde line. Place-names including P-Celtic carden ("thicket"), however, are found only in the Pictish "heartland", the westernmost example provided by Urquhart on Loch Ness, Adomnán's Airchartdan,<sup>55</sup> where Columba baptized one Emchat, whose Celtic name had a P-Celtic cognate, Ambicatus, possibly \*Amchat "in a language of Gallo-Brittonic descent in Columba's day", according to Professor Jackson.<sup>56</sup> The presence of P-Celtic elements in place-names other than those beginning in Pit- has caused Nicolaisen<sup>57</sup> to doubt the possible non-Indo-European element in the Pictish language which Jackson<sup>58</sup> proposed in light of some of the tribal names on Ptolemy's map and the unintelligibility of some otherwise decipherable Pictish inscriptions. Jackson has also

identified some of the legendary names in the Pictish kings' lists, such as Bargoit, Bliesblituth and Cantulachama as non-Celtic and possibly non-Indo-European.<sup>59</sup> Alfred Smyth, however, would blame the strange appearance of the names of the prehistoric kings on mistakes made in the manuscript transmission, which make "detailed statistical analysis of doubtful value".<sup>60</sup> In view of the place-name evidence, Nicolaisen, who sees the possibility of an Indo-European but pre-Celtic stratum in some river names in Pictland, argues that there was "considerable complexity" in the linguistic relationships between the various P-Celtic peoples of Dark Age Britain, including the Picts,<sup>61</sup> whether or not their spoken language included an older, non-Indo-European element, although the Pictish language was, according to Bede,<sup>62</sup> distinct from the other contemporary languages spoken in Britain.

Ptolemy's second century map includes information on the West Highlands and Islands.<sup>63</sup> The name of the Hebudae or Ebudae Insulae, later corrupted into "Hebrides", is probably pre-Celtic.<sup>64</sup>

Eóin MacNéill equated the Irish Tuatha Iboth, the Ibdaig of the Book of Invasions, with the "old traditional inhabitants of the Hebrides", or Ebudae.<sup>65</sup> The Annals of Ulster call the Hebrides Ibdig in 672.<sup>66</sup> The genealogy of the Ibdaig suggests that they were Irish Cruithin, a people possibly related to the Picts of Scotland, who apparently descended from immigrants from the British Isles.<sup>67</sup>

Watson suggested that the Ibdaig may have become the Dál nAraide, a Cruithin people who formed part of the Ulaid of Ulster, the same political confederation that included the Irish Dál Riata. The tuatha Orc ocus Iboth ("people of Orkney and the Hebrides") were both Cruithni, according to Irish tradition.<sup>69</sup> Of the names of the islands mentioned by Ptolemy, Malaios (Mull) is Celtic, Epidion, which is probably Islay, is Celtic and Sketis (Skye) is probably Celtic.<sup>70</sup>



Dumna is also Celtic and probably refers to the Outer Isles. A thirteenth century poem mentions Magh Domhna ("Plain of Domon"), recalling the "machraichean or sea-plain of the Hebrides".<sup>71</sup> The ocean called Due Caledonios, or Sea of the Hebrides, suggested to Watson, and now to Smyth, that the western seaboard may once have pertained to the Caledonii, although by Ptolemy's time the western limits of their territory apparently ran from the Beaully Firth to Loch Long.<sup>72</sup> Jackson has remarked that the name of the Caledonii "cannot be said to be Celtic with any confidence", but Watson certainly regarded it as Indo-European.<sup>73</sup> Lastly, the Epidion Akron, or headland of Kintyre, took its P-Celtic name from the tribe of the Epidii.<sup>74</sup> Ptolemy's place-name evidence for the West Highlands and Islands provides only one pre-Indo-European name, the Hebudae or Hebrides. With the possible name of the Sea of the Hebrides, the rest are Celtic, two of them P-Celtic: Epidion, which may have been an early name of Islay, and Epidion Akron, or Kintyre.

### Historical Evidence

Historical evidence for a period of Celtic, eventually Pictish occupation west of Druimalban may be found in Ptolemy's map as well as in Adomnán's Life of Columba, the Irish Annals and the Irish Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin ("Stories of Cano son of Gartnán"). Adomnán, the Annals and Scéla Cano all bear witness that Skye, in particular, was Pictish at some point.

The names of the tribes given by Ptolemy in the West Highlands are most probably all Celtic, as Dr. Smyth<sup>75</sup> has now stressed. In addition to the Epidii of Kintyre, Professor Watson identified as Celtic the names of the Creones, whose territory apparently stretched from north Argyll to Lochalsh, the Carnonacae of Wester Ross, and the Caereni of western Sutherland. The names of the near neighbours of the Carnonacae

and the Caereni, the Cornavii of Caithness and the Smertae of south Sutherland and northern Ross-shire, are identifiably P-Celtic, Smertae having Gaulish associations.<sup>76</sup>

In his Life of Columba, written in the late seventh century, Adomnán mentions in passing that the "mountains of the Spine of Britain", or Druimalban in Old Irish, formed the boundary between the Picts and the Scots of Dál Riata.<sup>77</sup> Druimalban divides Easter Ross from Wester Ross, crosses the Great Glen near Loch Lochy and separates northern Argyll from Breadalbane. He does not elaborate the point, but it is likely that such a tidy territorial division came about during the lifetime of Adomnán, who died in 704. A. O. and M. O. Anderson have ingeniously suggested that the Druimalban border may mark an accommodation reached between Dál Riata and the Pictish king Bruide son of Bili,<sup>78</sup> following the latter's victory in 685 over Northumbria at Dunnichen, Symeon of Durham's Nechtanessmere. According to the Andersons, such an agreement would have meant that Dál Riata took control over the Pictish areas north of Ardnamurchan and west of Druimalban, while the Picts gained supremacy over any Scottish settlements east of Druimalban.<sup>79</sup> Isabel Henderson has commented that if the Andersons' supposition is correct, Bruide son of Bili got the best of Dál Riata in the transaction, but the "cessation of Scottish obligations to the Northumbrians could have been in the nature of a quid pro quo".<sup>80</sup> Bede informs us that the Picts, the Scots and some of the Britons recovered their freedom after Dunnichen.<sup>81</sup> Bruide son of Bili was the son of the British king of Strathclyde and Bruide's brother Owen of Strathclyde defeated Dál Riata at the battle of Strathcarron c. 642.<sup>82</sup> Strathclyde may then have become the most powerful kingdom in the north, as Smyth points out, until Oswiu tipped the balance in the favour of Northumbria a decade or so after Strathcarron.<sup>83</sup> The power of Strathclyde tends to be overlooked



but the familial relations between the Pictish and Strathclyde kings suggests to Smyth that the Picts may have been subject to Strathclyde in the early seventh century and Strathclyde was strong enough a century after Strathcarron to overthrow the great Pictish king Oengus son of Fergus in 750, when the Annals of Ulster note the "end of the reign of Oengus".<sup>84</sup> The accession of Bruide son of Bili to the Pictish throne in 672 would have facilitated a closer relationship with Bruide's Strathclyde relations, who could only have benefited from the Pictish victory at Dunnichen. Dál Riata's collapse at Strathcarron left it subject first to the overlordship of Strathclyde and later to the Northumbrian kings Oswiu and Ecgfrith.<sup>85</sup> The burial at Iona, reported by Symeon of Durham, of Ecgfrith, who was killed at Dunnichen, and Adomnán's travels in 686 and 688 to the court of Aldfrith, Ecgfrith's successor, also suggest that Dál Riata may also have taken part in any diplomatic proceedings after Dunnichen.<sup>86</sup> Other historical evidence shows that Scottish infiltration of the Pictish western province began before Dunnichen, whatever formal agreements may have been reached afterwards. Bruide may only have decided not to interfere.

Skye was apparently the most important Pictish political centre west of Druimalban before the Scottish takeover. The senex Artbranan converted through an interpreter by Columba in Skye bore a Celtic name and Jackson would identify him as a Pict.<sup>87</sup> Smyth<sup>88</sup> points out that an interpreter would be required for a Gallo-Brittonic dialect distinct from purely Brittonic Celtic languages. Adomnán describes Artbranan as Geonae primarius cohortis, implying a degree of military organisation and hierarchy in Skye. Charles Thomas would identify Geonae as an adjectival form of Ce, one of the seven supposed sons of the eponymous Cruithne son of Cing, who, like his six brothers, is said to have given his name to a Pictish territorial division, according to later tradition.<sup>89</sup>

Dr. David Dumville, however, has shown that primarius cohortis is analogous to medieval Welsh penteulu ("head of the household"). Since Geonae is in the genitive, Dumville argues that it is more likely to be a personal name than a place-name.<sup>90</sup> Artbranan may thus have been the elderly Pictish captain of a body of armed retainers in the service of a Pict of some importance named \*Geon. The cultural context remains P-Celtic.

Smyth<sup>91</sup> has suggested that Columba's negotiations with Bruide son of Maelchú, which certainly provided for the safety of Christian missionaries in Orkney,<sup>92</sup> may also have sought protection for monastic expansion in the Pictish islands to the west. Adomán's account<sup>93</sup> of Columba's encounter with a boar, while separated from his attendant "brothers" when spending a few days in Skye, prompted Smyth<sup>94</sup> to posit the possibility of a Columban community in Skye during Columba's lifetime or shortly thereafter, but this is doubtful. Two seventh-century Irish saints did, however, set up monasteries in Pictish territory west of Druimalban.

The "red martyrdom" on 17 April 617 of St. Donnán of Eigg, who is commemorated in the Martyrologies of Tallaght, Oengus, Gorman and Donegal, is recorded in the Annals of Tigernach and the Annals of Ulster.<sup>95</sup> According to Mícheál Ó Cléirigh's seventeenth-century Martyrology of Donegal,<sup>96</sup> Donnán and his entire community were slaughtered by pirates. According to notes on the Martyrology of Oengus in the fifteenth century Rawlinson B.512,<sup>97</sup> Donnán and his monks built their monastery in a part of Eigg where the local queen kept her sheep. Annoyed, she ordered them to be killed. Thus the later Irish tradition places Donnán in a pagan, presumably Pictish context.<sup>98</sup> The Picts were certainly a maritime power. Adomán<sup>99</sup> reports that the Orkneys were subject to Bruide son of Maelchú in Columba's lifetime, implying the existence of a Pictish navy under royal control. The Annals of Ulster record the "destruction"

of the Hebrides (Ibdir) in 672,<sup>100</sup> which could only have been accomplished by sea. Either king Drest, deposed in 672, or his successor, Bruide son of Bili, might perhaps have been asserting control over the outlying Pictish provinces, while preparing for the disastrous battle with Ecgfrith of Northumbria in 672.<sup>101</sup> The "burning" of the Columban monastery of Mag Luinge in Tiree in 673<sup>102</sup> might then have been partly the result of the collapse of Pictish central leadership after Ecgfrith's notable victory in 672. The Annals of Ulster and Tigernach inform us that Bruide son of Bili, the victor of Dunnichen, "destroyed" the Orkneys in 682.<sup>103</sup> Perhaps Bruide was establishing control over the Pictish hinterland, while planning to overthrow Northumbrian overlordship. The loss of 150 Pictish ships is also recorded in 729.<sup>104</sup> A demonstrable maritime capacity, weak central control over the Pictish west and pagan Pictish resistance would easily permit a Pictish "pirate" raid on Eigg in the early seventh century.

Adomnán, who must have known the story, does not mention Donnán and Smyth<sup>105</sup> emphasises the "embarrassment" to Iona of an Irish saint who risked and lost all to pagan Pictish hostility to Dalriadic expansion northwards, in contrast to Columba, a royal personage who enjoyed royal patronage in Dál Riata and whose mission to king Bruide son of Maelchú was primarily diplomatic, despite Adomnán's hagiographical tales of magic competitions between Columba and Pictish druids.<sup>106</sup> There is no evidence that Columba travelled further north than Skye but the name of Kildonan in Eigg is matched by other dedications to Donnán in Skye, South Uist, Lewis and on the mainland in Wester Ross, on Loch Kishorn, on Loch Duich and at Cill Dhonnáin near Loch Garry,<sup>107</sup> suggesting that Donnán was well-remembered enough to have later had a cult of his own, although he was ignored by Adomnán.

The monastery in Eigg may not have been reconstituted until the

eighth century and Smyth argues that Maelrubai's foundation between 671 and 673 of the Applecross monastery represents an attempt to "rebuild on the ruins of Donnán's missionary activities" in the Pictish west.<sup>108</sup> Dr. Bannerman<sup>109</sup> agrees that Applecross must have been a Pictish neighbourhood at the time. Maelrubai's enterprise was more successful than Donnán's. The Annals of Ulster<sup>110</sup> record Maelrubai's death at Applecross in 722 in his eightieth year. Smyth points out that the greatest concentration of dedications to Maelrubai is in the same area where dedications to Donnán are also concentrated, on the west coast and in the islands north of Ardnamurchan, with a further spread to the east, in the Pictish "heartland".<sup>111</sup>

Dr. Isabel Henderson's suggestion, that a group of Pictish and Dalriadic entries in the Annals of Ulster between 675 and c. 750 may reflect an annotated set of Easter Tables kept at Applecross, has received the favourable attention of Dr. Marjorie Anderson.<sup>112</sup> The Annals of the Four Masters describe Maelrubai as abbot of Bangor when he founded Applecross and again at his death in 722, but his name is not included in a list of Bangor abbots drawn up c. 691, although there seems to have been some connection between Applecross and Bangor.<sup>113</sup> The Annals of Ulster and the Four Masters note the death in 802 of Mac-Oigi of Applecross, abbot of Bangor.<sup>114</sup> The earliest contemporary entries in the Irish Annals reflect the existence of a lost Iona Chroicle<sup>115</sup> and Dr. Bannerman and Dr. Smyth have called attention to the tradition of friendship between Iona and Bangor,<sup>116</sup> providing a proper milieu for annalistic activity at Applecross. Part of Henderson's evidence depends upon accounts in the Annals of three kindreds connected with Skye. Two of these cannot be proven to have been Pictish, but the kindred of Cano son of Gartnait may have been the last locally powerful Pictish dynasty of any political importance.

The first of the two probably non-Pictish families is that of Conaing son of Dunchad, whose death in a skirmish in Skye in 701 is linked with that of filius Cuandai.<sup>117</sup> Henderson, accepting a genealogy prepared by A. O. Anderson, would make Conaing and the son of Cuanda cousins.<sup>118</sup> In Anderson's genealogy, Conaing and Cuanda's son are nephews of Congal son of Eóganán, whose death is also reported in the Annals of Ulster in 701, but the entry on Congal's death is connected with that of an Irishman. Bannerman<sup>119</sup> rejects parts of Anderson's genealogy and makes Fiannamail nepos Dunchado, rex Dal Riati, who died in 700<sup>120</sup> and whom Anderson would make a descendant of Eóganán, father of Congal, a member of the Irish, rather than the Scottish Dál Riata. Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, however, is less inclined to separate Fiannamail entirely from Scottish Dál Riata and has proposed a variant of Anderson's genealogy.<sup>121</sup> In any event, none of the names in Anderson's genealogy are exclusively Pictish and the 701 entry on the deaths of Conaing and Cuanda's son alone connects the possible cousins with Skye, although Henderson's suggestion that they may have belonged to the surrounding area is worthy of consideration.

The second family connected with Skye by annal entries is that of Maelanfaith, whose son Oengus was killed in Skye in 710.<sup>122</sup> The Annals of Ulster also list the death in 725 of Congal, another son of Maelanfaith,<sup>123</sup> and, in the same entry, the deaths of Brecc of Fortriu, a Pict, and Oan, princeps of the monastery in Eigg, which, as Henderson notes, suggests a Pictish context for Congal,<sup>124</sup> although the names of Maelanfaith and his sons are Gaelic and the 710 entry alone connects them with Skye.

The Gaelic names of Conaing, Cuanda, Maelanfaith, Oengus and Congal and the deaths in Skye of members of their kindreds indicate Dalriadic attempts to subjugate the island even after any formal treaty

negotiated in the wake of Dunnichen. The evidence for the kindred of Cano son of Gartnait strongly suggests that Dalriadic expansion northwards continued after the martyrdom of Donnán and met local Pictish resistance before, as well as after Dunnichen. Professor Binchy has established that the Irish story Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin, found in a single manuscript version in the Yellow Book of Lecan, was adapted in the eleventh century from a compilation written in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>125</sup> Professor Thurneysen, the great grammarian of Old Irish, first noted the chronological inconsistencies and the discrepancies between the text of Scéla Cano and information in the Annals,<sup>126</sup> which confounded even Binchy and led him to believe that the historical Cano was the son of Gartnait, the older form of the name Gartnán, who was "probably the youngest" of the sons of Aedán mac Gabráin, the great king of Dál Riata, who died c. 608.<sup>127</sup> As proof, Binchy cited the Genealogie Albanensium, a list of genealogies appended to all known versions of the Senchus Fer nAlban ("History of the Men of Scotland"), which mentions a Gartnait son of Aedán mac Gabráin.<sup>128</sup> A. O. Anderson thought that the fictitious Cano, whose story is set in the reign of Aedán mac Gabráin, was meant to be the son of the Gartnait, king of the Picts, who died in 601, although that king Gartnait is described as the son of Domelch, who may have been his mother.<sup>129</sup> The Annals of Ulster record the killing in 688 of Cano son of Gartnait, who is elsewhere connected with Skye, the death of his daughter Coblaithe in 690 and the killing of his son Conamail in 705.<sup>130</sup> Unable to reconcile the Annals with the story, Anderson concluded that there must have been at least two Canos and that the father of the Skye Cano was either the Gartnait, son of Donald and king of the Picts, who died in 663, or, more likely in Anderson's view, the Gartnait son of Accidán whose "descendants" were at war with the "descendants" of Aedán in 649.<sup>131</sup> The Gartnán of Scéla Cano is at war



with Aedán mac Gabráin.<sup>132</sup> In either case, the context remains Pictish.

Bannerman has now shown that there were, as Anderson suspected, two Canos, each the son of a Gartnait, in seventh century Scotland.<sup>133</sup>

The Pictish king Gartnait who died in 601 was indeed the son of Aedán mac Gabráin by the Pictish Domelch, who must have been his mother.<sup>134</sup>

Gartnait, son of Aedán mac Gabráin, was succeeded in the Pictish kingship by Nechtan, presumably the Nechtan son of Cano who died in 621.<sup>135</sup>

A. O. Anderson equated Nechtan son of Cano with the Nechtan nepos Uerb of the Pictish kings lists and noted that Ferb was a woman's name in Irish.<sup>136</sup> Marjorie Anderson interprets nepos as "grandson" in this

instance.<sup>137</sup> Uerb may thus have been the grandmother of Nechtan son of Cano.<sup>138</sup> The forms of the names of two successive kings of the

late sixth and early seventh centuries, preserved in the kings lists as Gartnait filius Domelch and Nechtan nepos Uerb,<sup>139</sup> suggest that matrilinear nomenclature, at least, still functioned occasionally in Pictland into the first quarter of the seventh century. Smyth follows Bannerman in making king Gartnait, son of Domelch, a son of the Dalriadic king Aedán mac Gabráin, but rejects the entire notion of matrilinear succession amongst the Picts and prefers to see the kingship of the Gartnait of c. 600 as an example of Dalriadic overlordship of Pictland,<sup>140</sup>

a possibility in view of Aedán's Pyrrhic victory over the Pictish Miathi mentioned by Adomnán<sup>141</sup> and recorded in somewhat garbled fashion in the

Annals of Ulster and Tigernach c.596.<sup>142</sup> Smyth's dismissal of Pictish matrilinear succession has already been rejected by David Sellar and will probably receive similar treatment from other historians of the period.<sup>143</sup>

Cano, Nechtan's father, was the Canai Garb, son of Gartnait, son of Aedán mac Gabráin of the Genelaig Albanensium, so the activities of the first Cano son of Gartnait belong to the late sixth and early seventh centuries.<sup>144</sup>

The kindred of the second Cano son of Gartnait appear in several annal entries in addition to those recording his death and those of his daughter and son Connamail. The sons of Gartnait went to Ireland with the "people of Skye" in 668 and returned in 670.<sup>145</sup> The description of their departure from Skye in Scéla Cano is that of a royal retinue, complete with fifty gillies, each carrying the board of a fidchell game on his back, complete with gold and silver playing-men, with a musical instrument in his left hand, leading two greyhounds on silver leads in his right.<sup>146</sup> After their return, the Annals of Ulster record the "capture" of Conamail son of Cano in 673.<sup>147</sup> Bannerman identifies Gartnait, father of the Cano of Skye, as Gartnait son of Domnall and king of the Picts, who died in 663, and attributes the confusion arising from Scéla Cano to the existence of two Canos, each the son of a different Gartnait, one Cano pertaining to the early seventh century, the other to the second half of the century.<sup>148</sup> Mrs. Anderson has questioned her husband's suggestion, rejected by Bannerman, Henderson and O'Rahilly,<sup>149</sup> that Gartnait, father of Cano, was the Gartnait son of Accidán whose descendants were at war with the descendants of Aedán in 649. Mrs. Anderson, who sees the subsequent events in Skye as a Dalriadic attempt to impose overlordship on the local ruling family, has proposed that Domnall, father of the Pictish king Gartnait who died in 663, may have been Domnall Brecc of Dál Riata, killed at the battle of Strathcarron by the Britons of Strathclyde in 642.<sup>150</sup> Dr. Smyth, following Mrs. Anderson, suggests that the Picts, after a period under Strathclyde overlordship at the beginning of the seventh century, may then have been subject to Dál Riata until the battle of Strathcarron, when they reverted to Strathclyde overlordship before coming under Northumbrian domination in the reigns of Oswiu and Ecgfrith.<sup>151</sup> Dál Riata, too, may have fallen under Strathclyde suzerainty in the mid-seventh century, which could



help explain the interpolation of the verse in the Gododdin poem of c. 600 which includes the memorable line, "the head of Dyfnwal Frych (Domnall Brecc), ravens gnawed it".<sup>152</sup> Abbot Cumme of Iona (657-669) wrote of Dál Riata "held down by strangers", of whom the first may have been the Britons of Strathclyde, only to be replaced in turn by the Northumbrians under Oswiu.<sup>153</sup> If Cano son of Gartnait, son of Domnall were indeed the grandson of Domnall Brecc, it could have provided a pretext for other descendants of Aedán mac Gabráin to lay claim to Pictish Skye, at a time when Pictish central authority was weak and, like Dál Riata, under Northumbrian overlordship. Oswiu and Ecgfrith are unlikely to have been bothered by unrest in the Hebrides. In any event, Gartnait son of Domnall was certainly a Pictish king and his son Cano lived in a Pictish milieu in Skye during a period of turmoil engendered by Dalriadic expansion to the north.

According to Scéla Cano, Gartnait, father of Cano, was from Inis moccu Chéin, a place-name Binchy thought unlikely to have been synonymous with Skye.<sup>154</sup> Cano himself is said to be from Skye in a verse in Scéla Cano.<sup>155</sup> Dr. Colm Ó Baoill, noting that the name of Raasay is Norse in origin and therefore not datable before the second half of the ninth century, has identified Inis moccu Chéin as the Old Irish name for Raasay used at least between the Dalriadic takeover of Skye in the late seventh or early eighth century and the Viking settlement of Skye and Raasay almost two centuries later.<sup>156</sup> The last evidence for the contemporary use of moccu surnames is an early eighth century poem, suggesting that the name must have originated by that time.<sup>157</sup>

Maps of Raasay show a fort named Dun Can or Dun Caan dominating the highest point on the island. A late seventeenth century description of Skye and its adjacent islands states that "Duncan (sic) takes its name from Cannus, whom they relate to be Denmark's son".<sup>158</sup> The

Gaelic poet Sorley Maclean, a native of Raasay, informed Ó Baoill that the name of the fort in Gaelic is Dùn Cana.<sup>159</sup> The folk memory alive in the late seventeenth century did not extend beyond the advent of the Vikings and both the older name of the island and the pedigree of the Cano who gave his name to the fort were lost in the interim. The place-name evidence and the Annals associate both Skye and Raasay with the Pictish kindred of Cano son of Gartnait.<sup>160</sup> Cano, who died in 688, might have resided at times in Raasay, an island within sight of Skye as well as Applecross, during the early years of the abbacy of Maelrubai, who died peacefully in his eightieth year, whatever may have befallen Cano and his kin.

#### The Border Between Dál Riata and the Pictish Western Province

The precise boundary between Dál Riata and Pictland west of Druimalban, if there was one, before Druimalban itself became the boundary in the late seventh century, is difficult to determine. Columba's meeting with a layman at Coire-salcháin, thought to be in Morvern, and his intervention on behalf of one Colmán in Ardnamurchan imply that the mainland districts on the north side of the Sound of Mull were part of Dál Riata.<sup>161</sup> The Eilean Tioram Pictish hanging-bowl was found in Moidart, a short walk away from the River Shiel, where Adomnán himself seems to have gone to collect timber for the Iona monastery.<sup>162</sup> Eigg and the Small Isles were apparently Pictish in the early seventh century and the people of Skye continued to resist the post-Dunnichen Dalriadic takeover into the eighth century. The layman Columba met at Coire-salcháin informed the saint that he came from the area around the lake at Crog-reth. At the time of their meeting, Columba informed the unhappy layman that his home was being sacked by barbari vastatores.<sup>163</sup> The district in question,

near Loch Rannoch, was apparently accessible to Pictish raiders and is just east of Druimalban. The layman himself seems to have been a Gael and may thus provide an early example of Dalriadic emigration in the direction of the Pictish "heartland". The evidence is scanty but Dál Riata's northern border prior to Dunnichen was probably north of Ardnamurchan and somewhere south of Knoydart, its eastern boundary running perhaps from somewhere near the head of Loch Linnhe to Loch Lomond or Loch Long, where the borders of the kingdoms of the Picts, the Britons of Strathclyde and the Dál Riata of Argyll are likely to have met.

#### Summary of Archaeological, Place-Name and Historical Evidence

By the second century, the date of Ptolemy's map, the inhabitants of the West Highlands and Islands had Celtic tribal names and were at least under Celtic rule, whether or not they took over an older, pre-Indo-European system of matrilinear succession. Kintyre and Islay were apparently P-Celtic areas. Additional evidence for P-Celtic west of Druimalban is provided by the names of Applecross and Lochaber, as well as the three Pit- place-names in Lochcarron and Glenelg. The name of the Hebudaë or Hebrides, however, is pre-Celtic and Irish tradition linked their ancient inhabitants to those of the Orkneys. Archaeological finds in the Outer Isles and the monastery Donnán founded in Eigg indicate that Dál Riata had begun to encroach on Pictish areas north of Ardnamurchan by the seventh century. The material culture of the area was heterogenous but reflects contact with the Northern Isles and the Pictish "heartland" to the east of Druimalban, as well as Dál Riata, Ireland and the Britons to the south. The Pictish ruling family in Skye produced at least one king, whose rule must have extended to the Pictish "heartland". Inter-marriage between his family and the

✓ pict symbols  
↓  
Dalriadic royal house may have created more problems than it solved. The cessation of Pictish rule at the end of the seventh century seems to have created a power vacuum, at least in Skye, with all its attendant anarchy, not unlike that created by the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles at the end of the fifteenth century. When the Vikings arrived, a century after the Picts had relinquished control of their western province, they probably found a mixed population in Skye and the Outer Isles, whose Pictish members either lacked the inclination or were no longer in a position to commission symbol stones, although they may still have remembered the meaning of Pictish symbols and the purpose of the symbol stones.

#### The Meaning of Pictish Symbols and the Purpose of Symbol Stones

The problem of the purpose of Pictish symbol stones is doomed to insolubility, although Pictomania continues to beget ingenious solutions.<sup>164</sup> The various specific meanings assigned individual symbols by the putative analogies to Pictish society, inferred from better information for cultures elsewhere, are beyond the remit of this study, but a tentative consensus on the function of the stones is now emerging and a few general remarks may be made. Isabel Henderson once suggested that the symbols, which also decorate metalwork objects such as hand-pins and the uniquely Pictish massive silver chains, might have been a sign of ownership and that the symbol stones functioned as "notice boards defining the area of some person's or some institution's territorial influence".<sup>165</sup> Later, in her Rhind Lectures for 1976-1977, Dr. Henderson qualified her former suggestion, saying that the symbol stones "were erected on analogy with the Christian grave-marker, though not necessarily for the same purpose".<sup>166</sup> The strongest case for the function of the symbol stones as memorials has been made by Professor Charles Thomas, whose finely focused attention

was first drawn to the Picts in 1959, when he heard Henderson give a paper on Pictish beasts.<sup>167</sup> Thomas has now recapitulated and, to some extent, revised his views put forward in his two revolutionary articles of the early 1960s,<sup>168</sup> which he now sees "in part as a ballon d'essai".<sup>169</sup> Thomas, perhaps now more than ever, finds it "hard to credit that the appearance of these Class I stones in Pictland can - in so relatively confined a territory as the northern third of the British mainland - have been totally independent of, un-influenced by", the funerary tradition that began in Britain with Roman tombstones and gave way to the inscribed memorials of the Celtic Britons in the fifth and sixth centuries, some of which were decorated with simple crosses and Chi-Rho monograms; and argues that the pagan Picts consciously imitated the funerary practices of their Celtic Christian neighbours, "within the penumbra of some form of non-Christian belief".<sup>170</sup>

A small but growing number of Class I Pictish symbol stones has now been shown to be associated with extended inhumation burials, which developed in the early centuries A.D., in long cists and in circular or rectangular kerbed cairns.<sup>171</sup> Two symbol stones, one typologically early, the other typologically late (see below), were found near a burial ground at Ackergill, Caithness, which featured seven rectangular cairns, with two associated cists about 45 meters to the southeast, and a circular cairn about fifty meters to the northwest of the rectangular cairns. One of the symbol stones was associated with one of the long cists, the other with the circular cairn, which contained four extended inhumations.<sup>172</sup> The symbol stones at Watenan, Caithness and Garbeg, near the western shore of Loch Ness, were found in association with circular cairns.<sup>173</sup> The symbol stone discovered in the Dairy Park near Dunrobin Castle, Sutherland in 1977 was associated with a long cist in a rectangular cairn.<sup>174</sup>



Thomas has called attention to specially marked graves, set off from others in burial grounds by being placed in either circular or rectangular settings. Pre-Christian circular grave surrounds, attested in an Iron Age context from central Europe to Ireland, are found in a Gaelic context after the introduction of Christianity in the description in the Book of Armagh of the burial of a seventh century Irish king and in the probable seventh century Christian tomb known as "Eithne's Grave" on Eileach an Naoimh in the Garvellachs in the Inner Hebrides.<sup>175</sup> Iron Age rectangular grave surrounds are found in the Netherlands, the Rhineland and the south of England. A Christian inhumation cemetery is enclosed by a ditch, rectangular earthen bank and post-holes at Knockea, County Limerick.<sup>176</sup> The Pictish circular and rectangular cairns may therefore combine ancient local practice with Iron Age developments that carried over into the Early Christian period. Patrick Ashmore notes that "the most stimulating hypothesis to test is that the La Tène burial tradition continued sufficiently long in Scotland to be incorporated in Pictish culture".<sup>177</sup>

Only a handful of Class I Pictish symbols have thus far been found associated with burials, but the possibility remains that the majority of them were erected as memorials, either as tombstones or cenotaphs. Dr. Robert Stevenson, who believes that the evidence points to the symbols "being devised after the Picts became Christian", nonetheless assigns the symbols themselves a secular purpose that "must in general have told something about individuals in whose memory or honour the stones were erected".<sup>178</sup> Few would now agree with Dr. Joseph Anderson's argument that "no known system of Paganism in Europe has exhibited anything like the fertility of symbolic expression" characteristic of Pictish symbols and that they must therefore be Christian.<sup>179</sup> Thomas, too, sees the symbols as "semantically personal".<sup>180</sup> In this, as in



little else, the archaeologists Thomas and Stevenson are agreed.

### The Origins of Pictish Symbols

Thomas, following Clapham, holds that the Pictish symbols do not reflect the material culture of the historical Picts but refer instead to the heroic culture of the Iron Age from the first to the third centuries A.D.<sup>181</sup> Stevenson, on the other hand, makes the origin of the symbols contemporary with the Celtic decorative style of the typologically earliest Crescent symbol, which he believes to have been dependent upon, and therefore later than the development of Hiberno-Saxon manuscript illumination.<sup>182</sup> Both Stevenson and Thomas use the adjective "art historical" in denouncing each other,<sup>183</sup> politely but with determination. The art historical voice of reason has been maintained throughout by Isabel Henderson, who remarks that the style of decoration of Class I symbols "is undoubtedly La Tène", but is the result of revival rather than unbroken continuity,<sup>184</sup> without accepting Stevenson's late date for the emergence of the symbol series. In order to place the opposing viewpoints in perspective, it is first necessary to review briefly La Tène art of the Iron Age in Scotland. Pictish animal art appears at the beginning of Class I but involves the consideration of different problems and is discussed separately.

### La Tène in Scotland Until the Severan Raids

Professor Thomas has argued that the material culture that gave rise to Pictish symbols was that of a people who "fought with chariots, short swords, and bulbous-butted spears; wore bronze armlets, neck-rings and dragonesque brooches; and possessed such things as La Tène mirrors and ring-handled cauldrons".<sup>185</sup> Some of his suggestions for the origins of specific "object symbols" have been accepted by those best able to



do so, others have been rejected as too far-fetched. Thus Thomas's identification of Romilly Allen's Triple Oval symbol<sup>186</sup> as the stylised depiction of a massive bronze armlet is accepted by Dr. Morna Macgregor, who sees a "possibility of conscious antiquarianism" in its appearance in Pictish Class I.<sup>187</sup> Thomas identifies the single example of a design incised on a stone from Walton in Fife as a Donside or massive terret,<sup>188</sup> a form of chariot fitting whose known examples are concentrated in the Pictish "heartland" in Angus, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Macgregor dates them between the late first and mid-third centuries, with production centred in the territory of the Caledonii and Maeatae, whose use of chariots against Septimius Severus is described by Dio Cassius.<sup>189</sup> Thomas's identification of Romilly Allen's Notched Rectangle with Curved End as a stylised depiction of a sword of Piggott's first century Brigantian Group IV<sup>190</sup> is rather more convincing than the two lonely northern examples in Perthshire would suggest,<sup>191</sup> although Thomas's attempt to identify the Notched Rectangle and Z-rod symbol as a "chariot and two ponies" strains credulity.<sup>192</sup> Macgregor accepts Thomas's identification of the Z-rod symbol as a depiction of a spear with a knob butt, a type used by the Caledonians against Septimius Severus, which may have originated in the late Bronze Age, but with production concentrated in the Iron Age, from the first century B.C. into the third century A.D.<sup>193</sup> Henderson, however, notes that Thomas's argument that the V-rod and Z-rod are symbols of death is "only a conjecture" and points to the isolated Z-rod on the ring of a Pictish silver chain,<sup>194</sup> which was most likely an item of personal adornment for the living.

The similarity of the Pictish Mirror symbol to known examples of La Tène mirrors formed part of Sir Alfred Clapham's argument in favour of the Picts having maintained La Tène decoration into the symbol-carving period.<sup>195</sup> Sir Cyril Fox, following Clapham, divided Celtic mirror

handles in Britain into three groups, Bar Handles, Shaped Handles and Looped Handles,<sup>196</sup> and found that of the 24 Class I Pictish Mirror symbols then known, 14 have bar handles, four have shaped handles and five are unrelated to extant British La Tène mirror handles; concluding that the Picts imported Celtic mirror handles from Brigantian workshops and that Pictish symbols originated "before the use and knowledge of these forms died out".<sup>197</sup> Thomas, in turn, identified the Pictish Mirror symbol as a La Tène object and suggested that two of the five Pictish examples with no corresponding British La Tène exemplar reflected Roman paterae handles.<sup>198</sup> The only La Tène example of Fox's Shaped Handles is that on the Balmaclellan mirror, which Fox dated to the late first century and derived from Roman pan handles.<sup>199</sup> Its decoration consists of a simple, openwork triskele pattern. In 1952, Francoise Henry published a small handle found on Inishkea North, County Mayo, which is similar in shape to the Balmaclellan mirror and decorated with two pairs of concentric circles, with the bottom one having three pairs of engraved parallel lines dividing the inner circles into thirds, with an additional engraved line further sub-dividing one of the thirds.<sup>200</sup> Henry, noting that it might be the handle of a "bronze pan of sub-Roman type", which could later have been turned into a mirror handle, in view of two rivet holes along its upper edge, considered the possibility that it might be of the same type as the mirror handles on Class I Pictish stones, "if the Inishkea handle belonged to a mirror".<sup>201</sup> She dated it, by association with a brooch found on the site, to the late seventh or early eighth century, on the advice of H. E. Kilbride-Jones, who himself dated the brooch to the late seventh century but later assigned it to his Group D Pins, contemporary with his Group D zoomorphic penannular brooches, which he now places in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>202</sup> Stevenson, in line

with his late dating for the symbol series, places the Inishkea North object in the seventh or eighth century.<sup>203</sup> Thomas first suggested that it might be a patera handle but now apparently dismisses it altogether.<sup>204</sup> In any event, it is essential to realise that both the Balmaclellan and Inishkea North handles depended upon Roman or sub-Roman paterae handles and that Fox found no Pictish Class I examples related to Balmaclellan. The only possible mirror handle found in a Pictish area is made of bone and was found at Bac Mhic Chomain, in the same excavation that yielded the ogham-inscribed knife handle on Vallay Island off North Uist. Macgregor, who sees it as a cross between Fox's bar and shaped handles, also accepts that La Tène mirrors were later depicted on Pictish symbol stones.<sup>205</sup> The Bac Mhic Chomain handle is somewhat similar, however, to the handle of a Mirror symbol on a fragment of a symbol stone found on the Sands of Evie, Orkney, in 1967, which Dr. Graham Ritchie assigns to Fox's shaped handles,<sup>206</sup> which may be the case, if the outline of the Orkney example does not describe an openwork handle.

In addition to massive Donside terrets, surviving La Tène metalwork produced in the area of the future Pictish "heartland" includes spiral snake bracelets, massive armlets and the mouth of the Deskford carnyx. Dr. Macgregor, who has identified the Snailwell spiral snake bracelet from Cambridgeshire, datable to c. 43 A.D., as the stylistic precursor of the Caledonian series and the Culbin Sands, Moray example as the stylistic link between the metalwork of the Caledonii and Maeatae in the north and Belgic metalwork further south, attributes the development of spiral snake bracelets in Scotland to refugee Belgic metalworkers and dates the Scottish bracelets to the late first and second centuries.<sup>207</sup> The "slender trumpets" of the Culbin Sands bracelet, "not necessarily" made south of the Tay, are also found on

massive armlets and the Deskford carnyx mouth.<sup>208</sup> The massive armlets bespeak a "renaissance" of Celtic metalwork in northern Scotland in the late first and second centuries and probably reflect Brigantian influence made available in the wake of the Boudiccan revolt and the campaigns of Agricola.<sup>209</sup> Professor Piggott first identified the Deskford boar's head as the mouth of a carnyx and noted the similarity between the "trumpet and lentoid" decoration of the mouldings around its eyes and the decoration of the Auchenbadie armlet found ten miles east of Deskford.<sup>210</sup> Macgregor links the production of the Deskford carnyx to the battle of Mons Graupius, a date in keeping with her stylistic dating of the related massive armlets.<sup>211</sup> Contact between Caledonian workshops of the first and second century and lands west of Druimalban is suggested by the spiral snake bracelet found at Duntulm in Skye and the massive armlet from Newry in County Down.<sup>212</sup>

The disappearance of high quality metalwork in Pictland after the second century suggests, as Dr. Stevenson has observed, that the Severan raids of the late second and early third centuries left the indigenous culture incapable of sustaining aristocratic patronage.<sup>213</sup> The collapse of aristocratic patronage and subsequent levelling of society may have begun in the second half of the second century, when it becomes difficult to determine how often the Antonine Wall was shored up and re-occupied.<sup>214</sup> Internal chaos spilled over the Antonine Wall in 197, led by the Maeatae, and in 210 Septimius Severus invaded the north with the intention of slaughtering all he could find, but died early in 211. His successor Caracalla seems to have withdrawn eventually to the south, leaving the Caledonii and Maeatae to their own devices.<sup>215</sup> Evidence for the La Tène style disappears in Pictland thereafter until the creation of the Norrie's Law repoussé silver plaque, discussed in greater detail below, and the emergence of the Class I symbol stones.

## Animal Art of the Scottish Iron Age

Gordon Childe first related the incised depictions of animals on a few Iron Age pottery sherds, found in the Hebrides, to the decoration of Gaulish La Tène vases and Belgic metalwork in England, and suggested that the Hebridean sherds might have been the forerunners of the "superbly carved bulls of Burghead and the Pictish stones of the Dark Ages".<sup>216</sup> Stevenson dismissed the sherds in 1955, as "their date is very uncertain".<sup>217</sup> At that time, however, Charles Thomas had not yet published the sherd from Bragar in Lewis (pl. 1), whose decoration Dr. Macgregor has since related to the "hatched triskele" on a sherd from Foshigarry, North Uist, and the "assymetrical lyre loop", stylistically "in an advanced state of disintegration", on a bronze spoon from Burrmouth, Berwickshire, which she would date to the second half of the first century.<sup>218</sup> The Hebridean sherds, including Bragar and Foshigarry, all share a similar fabric and were produced locally.<sup>219</sup> All the animals on the sherds from Lewis, Coll and South Uist are deer and Thomas would make the depictions incised on rock faces of a roebuck in Argyll and a fish in Midlothian their contemporaries.<sup>220</sup> Cast bronze bulls and cows, whose production extended into the third century, are found from Kent to Lanarkshire and boars and pigs are found from Sussex to Northumberland. None of the bronze cast animals found in Britain predate the first century and all appear to follow in a tradition already established on the Continent.<sup>221</sup> Macgregor relates a stone cup from Banffshire, with a snake-head handle, its coils indicated on the sides of the cup by incised grooves, to the Culbin Sands snake bracelet and dates a bronze raven mount from Traprain Law in East Lothian to the fourth century A.D.<sup>222</sup> All indicate a general interest in animal art in Iron Age Scotland, the Pictish "heartland" and the Outer Isles. The background to Iron Age animal art in Scotland is unmistakably Continental and Celtic.<sup>223</sup> In

addition to Continental bronze animal figurines, pots of the fourth century B.C. in the Marne area display incised hippocamps and stylised horses and echoes of both appear in repoussé on the Marlborough vat from Wiltshire and the Aylesford bucket, Belgic objects of either the first century B.C. or the first century A.D.<sup>224</sup> The Belgic introduction of Continental La Tène animal art into Britain and the Belgic influence on spiral snake bracelets in Scotland indicate the means and the route by which animal motifs may have travelled from Gaul to the future Pictish areas.

The artistic importance of the locally-produced Bragar sherd to the development of Pictish Class I animals is out of all proportion to its size and rarity. Thomas distinguishes three essential features of its decoration: "a pear-shaped lobe enclosing a radiate circle on the shoulder-joint", a "worm-like lobe" along its belly, decorated with "transverse bars" across its width, and other transverse bars decorating the rest of its body.<sup>225</sup> Transverse bars appear early in La Tène art on the Continent, probably in the fifth century B.C., on the bodies of deer, boars, birds, a hare, and a wolf incised on a clay flagon, of a type mentioned by Posidonius, from Matzhausen in Bavaria, whose decoration Jacobsthal derived from Etruscan art.<sup>226</sup> Thomas, following Jacobsthal, calls attention to the strips of transverse bars on a horse engraved on an Etruscan helmet of c. 500 B.C. and those on boars engraved on two slightly later Etruscan helmets, which Jacobsthal related to the Matzhausen flagon.<sup>227</sup> The transverse bars on all these animals, which Jacobsthal saw as reflections of an orientalising classical style, serve to isolate and focus attention upon the haunches and shoulders. Jacobsthal and Thomas have both discussed the importance of the decoration of the fifth century B.C. bronze scabbard from the Hallstatt inhumation burial No. 994.<sup>228</sup> Its shape, chape, geometric and foliate



decoration are Celtic but its engraved figures suggest Etruscan influence and Jacobsthal concluded that it was made in a transalpine workshop by either a Celtic armourer working with an engraver from Este, or by "one man commanding both styles".<sup>229</sup> Its significance for our purpose lies in the ornamentation of the haunches, which are filled with spirals or foliate motifs.<sup>230</sup> The emphasis placed on the joints of the animals on the Matzhausen flagon and the Hallstatt sword look forward to the Bragar, Lewis sherd. Jacobsthal and Thomas relate the focus on haunches and shoulders to the animals on the Basse-Yutz flagons from Lorraine and attribute its origin to the influence of the steppe art of the Scythians and Sarmatians.<sup>231</sup> Sir Ellis H. Minns, the formidable authority on steppe art, lent his considerable weight to the various connections detected by Jacobsthal and Thomas by anticipating them in 1942, when he informed the British Academy that the ancestry of the shoulder curls on the Basse-Yutz animals, as well as those on the deer on the Lullingstone hanging-bowl and the calf in the Book of Durrow, was to be found in the art of the steppes.<sup>232</sup> Stevenson rejects Thomas's work on the Iron Age background of Pictish Class I animals as "almost a reductio ad absurdum of art-historical comparison"<sup>233</sup> and the Bragar sherd especially would seem to be too small and too fragile to maintain so many links simultaneously, but it was locally produced in the Scottish Iron Age and it should not be punished for telling us so much when there is so little else to do so. Its strips of transverse bars and articulated joints follow in a Eurasiatic tradition and the evidence of one's eyes must admit the similarity between the "worm-like lobe" on the underside of its belly and the incised scrolls and volutes used to define mass and volume on the bodies of Class I Pictish animals.

The early Scythian influence on Celtic art, which eventually made its way to Lewis to be engraved on the Bragar sherd, may have received



additional reinforcement in the second and third century A.D., when 5,500 Sarmatian troops served in the Roman army in Britain. Marcus Aurelius sent the Sarmatians to Britain some time between 169 and 180. It is not known where they were stationed and it cannot be said with any confidence that they manned Hadrian's Wall, but they were settled as veterans at Ribchester in Lancashire, where two legionary centurions of Sarmatian cavalry are known to have been appointed, one between 222 and 235, the other c. 238.<sup>234</sup> The possibility of a late Sarmatian influence in northern Britain, which Thomas has not suggested, is rendered all the more likely by two startling comparisons Thomas has made. The backward-looking goose on the Class I Easterton of Roseisle symbol stone near Burghead is amazingly close to a wooden bird from Pazyryk and the correspondence between the unusual Double Crescent symbol from Newton of Lewesk in Aberdeenshire and a wooden harness disc, also from Pazyryk, is utterly astonishing.<sup>235</sup> Pazyryk is in the Altai Mountains on the eastern edge of the Sarmatian homeland in Central Asia<sup>236</sup> and its frozen tombs have yielded a number of otherwise perishable objects. Thomas dismisses the sword and square shield on the Newton of Lewesk stone as medieval or modern additions, but Graham Ritchie has established that square and rectangular shields, of the type shown incised at Newton of Lewesk and depicted in relief sculpture at Eassie, Kirriemuir, Shandwick, and on the St. Andrews Sarcophagus, descend from a native adaptation of Roman shields in the early centuries A.D. that continued in use into the ninth century.<sup>237</sup> A people capable of preserving a distinctive shield type, adapted from foreign models, from the first or second century until the ninth would certainly have been capable of preserving the design of other articles of military equipment, such as fittings for horse harness, during the same period.

The native interest in animal art may well have been given an

additional impetus towards naturalism by contact with provincial Roman sculpture. The Maeatae would have seen distance slabs on the Antonine Wall. A surviving example from Bridgeness includes a pig, a sheep and a bull in a Roman sacrificial scene.<sup>238</sup> A charging wild boar, the symbol of the Twentieth Legion, is depicted on the Hutcheson Hill distance slab found in 1969.<sup>239</sup>

There was, therefore, a native tradition of Scottish Iron Age art which traced its roots to the beginnings of the La Tène style on the Continent and may have outlived the great metalwork produced in the future Pictish "heartland" in the first and second centuries. The possible additional Eurasiatic influence made available by Sarmatian cavalry stationed in Britain in the second and third centuries, if indeed there was one, was insufficient to provide for its continuity in other than perishable media. The latest Iron Age animal figure in Scotland is the bronze raven from Traprain Law, which may be as late as the fourth century. There is no datable evidence thereafter for animal art in Scotland until the appearance of Class I symbol stones in the Pictish "heartland" and its western province in the West Highlands and Islands.

### Stylistic Origins and Dating of Pictish Class I

In 1955, Robert Stevenson proposed that the Pictish Crescent symbol was originally designed complete with internal decoration and that all subsequent versions descend from an ornamentally correct original.<sup>240</sup> Isabel Henderson supported Stevenson's "declining symbol" theory and showed that the same is true of other Pictish symbols.<sup>241</sup> With the passage of time, the quality of symbol decoration declined, the precise form of the symbols degenerated and their meaning may have become obscured as well. Henderson has demonstrated, for example, that the Z-rod and V-rod symbols were first depicted with differentiated terminals

but that these eventually became indistinguishable.<sup>242</sup> Stevenson identified the Crescent on a Class I stone at Golspie in Sutherland as the extant example closest to the prototype and related its ornament to the curvilinear patterns found on hanging-bowl escutcheons and the decoration of initials in the Cathach of St. Columba.<sup>243</sup> Stevenson later stressed that his identification of the Golspie Crescent as prototypical was the "surprise result of making sketches of all the decorated examples", which revealed that Golspie contained all of the main elements found in the three types of Crescent decoration distinguished by Stevenson, elements "hard to combine if originally separate".<sup>244</sup>

Charles Thomas would now advocate a sixth or seventh century emergence date for Pictish symbols in stone, but he continues to draw a fundamental distinction between the history of the symbols and the practice of incising symbols in stone.<sup>245</sup> In the early 1960s, however, Thomas suggested a fifth or sixth century date for the first symbol stones.<sup>246</sup> Professor R. A. S. Macalister had suggested in 1940 that the geometric symbols "may have been an artistic development, under La Tène influence, of the cup-and-circle and other devices of bronze-age sculpture".<sup>247</sup> Following Macalister, Thomas argues that some Pictish symbols, such as the Crescent, Circular Disc and Double Disc, which are all found in the West Highlands and Islands, were adopted from "the component strains behind the Pictish people of history". Their ornament may be Celtic, with origins in the Iron Age, but, in Thomas's view, their outlines belong to the Bronze Age.<sup>248</sup> Stevenson and Thomas are thus agreed that the internal decoration of Class I geometric symbols is Celtic, but Thomas would place its origins in the La Tène period itself, whereas Stevenson would date it after the revival of La Tène ornament in the early medieval period. Isabel Henderson, without accepting Stevenson's very late date for the emergence of the symbol series, places the Pictish

symbolic system within the context of a politically and culturally unified society "not found in the north until the fifth or sixth centuries", the earliest possible date for the carving of symbols in stone, to which she has most recently assigned a beginning date of c. 600, ranging perhaps into the first quarter of the seventh century.<sup>249</sup> At other times, however, she has suggested a slightly earlier date for the earliest symbol stones, in the second half of the sixth century, during the reign of Bruide son of Maelchú.<sup>250</sup> Like Stevenson, Henderson sees the internal decoration of the earliest Class I symbol stones as part of a revival of the La Tène style, "rather than a marvellously maintained version of the style itself".<sup>251</sup> Before discussing the nature and the dating of the La Tène revival, however, some consideration must be given to the problematic Pictish Beast or "elephant", which is crucial to Stevenson's dating of the symbol stones, although it is not found west of Druimalban, and to the style of realistic Class I Pictish animals.

### The Pictish Beast

Cecil Curle suggested that the Pictish Beast is "merely another version" of the developed Salin Style II Germanic interlaced animal found in the Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels.<sup>252</sup> Stevenson added the Sutton Hoo gold clasps, the Monymusk reliquary and the Tara and Hunterston brooches to either the ancestry or the immediate family of the Pictish Beast, to which he assigned an origin date of c. 700.<sup>253</sup> Henderson identified the Pictish Beast on the same Golspie stone that features Stevenson's prototypical Crescent as the closest extant example to the prototype of that uniquely Pictish animal, but noted that the "bulging foreheads and separated beaks" of the Hunterston Brooch animals are closer to the later, debased Pictish Beasts than to the Golspie prototype.<sup>254</sup> Henderson acknowledges the general similarities between

the interlaced animals on fol. 192V in the Book of Durrow, those on the Sutton Hoo purse cover and the Pictish Beast, but has suggested that the Sutton Hoo animals and the Pictish Beast may share some common Romano-British or British ancestor.<sup>255</sup>

One of the distinguishing features of the Pictish Beast is the long tendril or lappet that issues from the back of its head and flows down the length of its back. The lappets may be nothing more than stylised and elongated ears, as Stevenson observes in regard to the Hunterston Brooch creatures.<sup>256</sup> Lappets are also found on the interlaced animals on the Tara Brooch, the Monymusk Reliquary and in the Lindisfarne Gospels,<sup>257</sup> but not in any of the earlier metalwork cited by Stevenson. Ears or lappets of any sort are uncommon in Salin's Style I.<sup>258</sup> Animals with slightly elongated ears do, however, appear in Kent in the late fifth and early sixth century, attached to animals on metalwork examples of Sonia Hawkes's Jutish Style A. Some of the quadrupeds on the Sarre Quoit Brooch and the Bifrons pendants have ears or lappets,<sup>259</sup> which are occasionally also applied to otherwise anthropomorphic elements of Kendrick's Helmet Style, most notably on the sixth century Taplow drinking-horn mounts.<sup>260</sup> Animals with elongated ears appear on later Style I objects, such as the saucer brooches from Long Wittenham in Berkshire.<sup>261</sup> Lappets of a sort occasionally occur in Salin Style II, falling forward along the muzzle or curling up beneath the throat, but those on the "horses" on the Sutton Hoo shield-boss flange run back along the neck.<sup>262</sup> None of these animals, however, can be considered naturalistic. The Pictish Beast is a fantastic creature but its interior body scrolls give it a realistic volume that transcends the two-dimensional design of the Germanic menagerie. The jaws and cheeks of the Hunterston Brooch animals are described by granulation, in a manner similar to Class I Pictish animal body scrolls, and Stevenson has argued that if

their heads pointed the other way and their hindquarters were straightened out, the Hunterston animals would, in fact, be Pictish Beasts.<sup>263</sup>

Thomas believes instead that the Hunterston animals developed from the Pictish Beast.<sup>264</sup> The sophistication of the design of the lappeted animals on the Hunterston and Tara Brooches, on the Monymusk Reliquary and in the Lindisfarne Gospels presupposes the existence of a simpler creature, ready to hand once the necessary techniques had been mastered, that could then be bent and twisted at will. Its origins in Britain are, perhaps, suggested by the beast on the late Romano-British copper-gilt pendant from Margidunum in Nottinghamshire, cited by Kendrick as the final stage in the distortion of naturalism before its dissolution into abstract ornament.<sup>265</sup> The Margidunum animal may have been a stag in a previous incarnation, but its antlers have been reduced to a flowing tendril, filling the top space of the pendant. It should be noted that one of the Pictish Beasts in Jonathan's Cave in Fife has two lappets, suggestive of antlers.<sup>266</sup> The possibility of a late Romano-British contribution to the development of the Pictish Beast is increased by the production of Group I hanging-bowl escutcheons, which grew out of late Romano-British metalwork, in the Pictish "heartland". Contact between Pictland east of Druimalban and early post-Roman Celtic centres south of Hadrian's Wall is also suggested by the similarity between the palmette-derived design on a fifth or sixth century lead brooch mould die from Dinas Powys<sup>267</sup> and a comparable form carved in isolation on the wall of Jonathan's Cave in Fife.<sup>268</sup>

### The Stylistic Origins of Class I Pictish Animals

Dr. Stevenson is particularly emphatic on the subject of Class I animals and firmly believes that the scrolls used to articulate their joints derive entirely from the Hiberno-Saxon manuscript tradition.<sup>269</sup>



According to Stevenson, the Book of Durrow represents the first stage in the development of Insular joint-scrolls, one not found in Pictish sculpture.<sup>270</sup> The brittle angularity of the joint-scrolls on the Lion of St. Mark in Durrow (fol. 191V) reflects metalwork conventions in Stevenson's view. Stevenson's second stage, found in Pictish Class I, is represented by the more curvilinear scrolls on the calf symbols of St. Luke in the Echternach Gospels (fol. 115V) and the Trier Domschatz Codex 61 (fol. 1V) and by the scroll on the Eagle of St. John in the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge fragment MS 197B (fol. 1).<sup>271</sup> Stevenson concludes that the Picts improved upon the example of Christian Evangelist symbols by inventing their own system of "representing in comparable symbols a tradition associating certain people with animals" and would thus date all Pictish animals no earlier than the late seventh century.<sup>272</sup>

Dr. Henderson's attention has also been drawn to the body scrolls on Pictish Class I animals and she perceptively suggests that their function is volumetric, as Thomas has also noted,<sup>273</sup> and presupposes a lost body of repoussé metalwork appliques, which might have been soldered on metal or sewed on cloth.<sup>274</sup> Henderson also relates the Echternach and Cambridge Evangelist symbols to Pictish Class I, but points out that the artists of the two manuscripts "poke crosses and geometrical patterns in from the edge of the page, besieging the creature", in effect producing "a criticism of the isolation of the animal", a presumably later feature certainly not characteristic of the depiction of the animals on Class I stones,<sup>275</sup> whose invention must therefore antedate the manuscripts. Henderson further distinguishes two variants of the "scroll formula" used on Pictish quadrupeds: one "when the near hind leg of the beast is moving forwards", the other "when it is behind". Examples of the two types are provided by the Burghead bull in the



British Museum and the Ardross wolf, respectively.<sup>276</sup> Only the second type is found in the Book of Durrow, the Echternach Gospels and Trier 61. The outline of the Durrow calf (fol. 124V), however, is "sensitively naturalistic", although the simple spirals at its joints are not as naturalistic as the scrolls on the Burghead bull or the Ardross wolf, but Henderson admits that the naturalism of the calf's outline combined with the body scrolls of the Durrow lion "provides a total model for the Pictish animals if one chooses to make the relationship run this way".<sup>277</sup> The Durrow animals, however, are more likely to represent the fragmentation of a once cohesive system of animal representation. As Henderson remarks, "behind the Book of Durrow lion lies a model in which the scrolls do what they are supposed to do - fit the anatomy of the animal".<sup>278</sup> The coiled trumpets of the Durrow calf appeared in a cruder form on the stags on the late sixth or early seventh-century Lullingstone hanging-bowl, which Thomas, Fowler and Longley have argued, may reflect Pictish influence.<sup>279</sup> Lullingstone may not itself have been a Pictish product, as Laing would have it,<sup>280</sup> but may instead have been a somewhat inept attempt to imitate Pictish repoussé trumpet spirals. The only surviving evidence for repoussé metalwork in Pictland is the repoussé plaque from the Norrie's Law hoard, which must be discussed in relation to the revival of La Tène metalwork in Sub-Roman and early medieval Britain and Ireland.

### The La Tène Revival

The study of Class I Pictish animals alone, whether fantastic or naturalistic, cannot solve the dating problem and one must turn instead to the Celtic ornament of the geometric symbols. Professor Thomas continues to argue that the symbols originated in the Iron Age, were retained in the form of tattoos and appeared in stone in the sixth and

seventh centuries.<sup>281</sup> Stevenson's c. 700 date depends, in part, on his study of Pictish metalwork, to which he has devoted more attention than any other scholar. Both wrote before the most recent work was available on the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl and both have ignored the Norrie's Law repoussé plaque.

Stevenson has shown that the earliest identifiable Pictish metalwork, which he would generally date pre-700, is almost devoid of decoration.<sup>282</sup> Three of the five extant terminal rings, attached to five of the ten surviving massive Pictish silver chains, are plain, as are the much smaller silver chain and bracelet from the Gaulcross hoard.<sup>283</sup> The surfaces of the two large Norrie's Law silver "brooches" with twisted hoops and one of the three large Tummel Bridge silver brooches are also plain, although the other two Tummel Bridge brooches are scantily ornamented with dots.<sup>284</sup> Neither the Eilean Tioram nor the Tummel Bridge hanging-bowl escutcheons bear surface decoration.<sup>285</sup> Mrs. Fowler is inclined to an early date for this material, between the fourth and sixth century, while Stevenson is more comfortable with a seventh century date.<sup>286</sup> In any event, the Picts do not seem to have applied La Tène decoration to metalwork for a period of several centuries, ending in the sixth or seventh century. Stevenson has suggested that the design of the prototypical Golspie Crescent may first have been worked out on a "sheet of embossed metal foil".<sup>287</sup> Henderson traces the pre-sculptural development of Class I animals to repoussé metalwork and would derive the Pictish Beast from "a source where this type of animal is not used as an all-over pattern, that is from metalwork".<sup>288</sup> Developments since 1934 no longer permit agreement with Clapham's contention that original La Tène ornament survived intact in Pictland.<sup>289</sup>

The resumption of La Tène decoration in Pictland is represented by the fragmentary plaque from the Norrie's Law hoard that features repoussé

spirals, but attention to date has been focused instead on Pictish enamelled metalwork. Mrs. Fowler assigns a sixth-century date to the enamelled hand-pins from the Gaulcross hoard in Banffshire and the two enamelled hand-pins from the Norrie's Law hoard in Fife.<sup>290</sup> Stevenson links their fine "hair-spring" spirals, reserved against an enamel background, to the escutcheons on the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl and dates the Gaulcross and Norrie's Law hand-pins to the early seventh century.<sup>291</sup> Their Pictish origin is demonstrated by the Z-rod symbol on the back of one of the Norrie's Law pins.<sup>292</sup> Stevenson and Dr. Gunther Haseloff follow Francoise Henry in assigning an Irish provenance to the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl, in view of the correspondence between its millefiori decoration and the millefiori and enamel decorated brooch from Ballinderry Crannog No. 2, dated by its excavator to c. 600, and now by Bruce-Mitford to the end of the sixth century.<sup>293</sup> Millefiori production in Ireland is attested at several sites. Excavations at the Garranes ring-fort in County Cork, for example, yielded fragments of glass, millefiori and enamel, as well as a triskele, trumpet pattern and red enamel decorated bronze button, all of which belong to a single occupation layer dated by the excavator to c. 500.<sup>294</sup> Other early Dark Age evidence for Celtic ornament in Ireland is provided by a gold foil bird with Celtic scrollwork in beaded gold wire, found at the bottom of the oldest occupation layer in the Garryduff I ring-fort in County Cork and stratigraphically dated to the sixth century.<sup>295</sup>

Dr. Bruce-Mitford accepts a relationship between Irish millefiori and the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl (No. 1), but he properly rejects an Irish provenance for the bowl, despite the similarities between the hair-spring spirals on its escutcheons and those on Irish latchets, because "the linear Celtic style and the use of millefiori have not, as yet, been found combined in an Irish context".<sup>296</sup> The Pictish hand-pins

exhibit equally fine hair-spring spirals and the modelling of the boars' heads below the hook-escutcheons on Sutton Hoo No. 1 are comparable to the zoomorphic heads on the Tiree and North Uist swivel-rings, as well as that on the Eilean Tioram hanging-bowl, but the lack of millefiori in Pictland also militates against a Pictish provenance for Sutton Hoo No. 1.<sup>297</sup> Bruce-Mitford therefore concludes that the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl must have come from one of the "politically lively and important but, to us, archaeologically blank kingdoms of Wales or the North-West of Britain".<sup>298</sup> In doing so, he echoes the earlier work on enamelled hanging-bowl escutcheons by Sir Thomas Kendrick, who remarked that "there is not the slightest reason to suppose that this post-Roman style is anything but a native development of patterns that were a part of Romano-British art", although he placed hanging-bowl production entirely in England;<sup>299</sup> and that of H. E. Kilbride-Jones, who envisaged a North British school moving southwards towards the comparative safety provided by the shadow of the departing agents of Imperial order.<sup>300</sup>

In any event, the Picts appear to have developed hair-spring spirals in enamelled metalwork of their own by c. 600. Bruce-Mitford emphasises the pivotal role that "must surely have been played by the powerful British kingdoms of the North and West" in linking the revitalised Celtic art of Ireland and Pictland.<sup>301</sup> The linear quality of Pictish enamel work is reflected in the interior decoration of the prototypical Gospie Crescent, suggesting a c. 600 date for the appearance of incised Pictish symbols in stone.

Charles Thomas continues to argue for the continuity of Pictish symbols from the Iron Age to the early medieval period, preserved in the form of tattoos, as Francis Diack had earlier suggested.<sup>302</sup> Dr. Nora Chadwick's study of the evidence for Pictish tattooing, however, reveals that none of the late classical or early medieval sources for

Pictish tattoos had any first-hand knowledge of the subject and may have merely been repeating the conventions of the literate, although Professor Jackson stresses that the Romans who gave them the name certainly understood Picti to mean "the Painted People".<sup>303</sup> Whatever may have been true of the Caledonii and the Maeatae, however, Gildas, Adomnán and Bede fail to mention tattooed Picts and Thomas is reduced to invoking the tenth-century Cormac's Glossary, a notably antiquarian Irish document, and tattooed Mercians in the eighth century,<sup>304</sup> which still tell us nothing about the Picts in the late sixth and early seventh century, when Pictish symbol stones are most likely to have been first erected. Thomas's reliance on tattoos as the sole means of transmission of La Tène motifs from the Iron Age to the early medieval period seriously weakens his case. Most recently, he has rejected painted planks as precursors of Class I symbol stones,<sup>305</sup> although carved wood, leatherwork and domesticated animal brands are as perishable as human skin. If the Picts of the early historical period did tattoo themselves, they would have combined the decoration of their own Pictish bodies with a taste for the austere, plain metalwork of the type represented by the Norrie's Law and Tummel Bridge silver brooches, a juxtaposition which may, in turn, have given way to undecorated Picts sporting highly ornamental jewellery, such as the Gaulcross and Norrie's Law hand-pins or, later, penannular brooches of the St. Ninian's Isle type. It must also be stressed that the decoration of first and second century Caledonian metalwork, the massive armlets, snake bracelets and the Deskford carnyx, do not provide the necessary ornamental vocabulary found in Pictish Class I symbols, however Celtic both may be.

The Norrie's Law repoussé plaque (pl. 2) heralds the La Tène revival in Pictland, looks back to first and second century Caledonian metalwork and forward to Class I animals. Professor Piggott sees it as

"clear evidence for the continuity" of the La Tène style of first or second century Caledonian metalwork and Irish repoussé bronze discs and assigns it a date of c. 600.<sup>306</sup> Dr. Macgregor would make it "proto-Pictish".<sup>307</sup> Henry followed Nils Åberg in assigning it a seventh-century date in view of the similar repoussé decoration of the unique Irish brooch from the Ardakillin Crannog in Roscommon.<sup>308</sup> The shape of the Ardakillin brooch is of a Merovingian type but its interlace decoration suggests comparison with Lombardic metalwork, such as the c. 600 cross from Civezzano.<sup>309</sup> The Ardakillin brooch is thus correctly dated to the seventh century, but its repoussé ornament is of a later type than that seen on the Norrie's Law plaque. The relief is comparable in both but the design of Ardakillin is composed entirely of C-scrolls, not the coils seen in Norrie's Law, nor does the Ardakillin brooch have the trumpets of Norrie's Law. The trumpets of the Norrie's Law repoussé plaque recall the "slender trumpets" of first and second century Caledonian metalwork but the wide expanses of flat, undecorated silver on the Norrie's Law plaque mark a transitional phase following the undecorated Pictish silver brooches also found in the Norrie's Law hoard and at Tummel Bridge. The Norrie's Law repoussé plaque is thus our only evidence for the "recessions and keeled ridges of repoussé metalwork" which, Henderson has argued convincingly, lie behind the body scrolls of Pictish Class I animals,<sup>310</sup> and should be dated to the second half of the sixth century. Its coiled spirals appear slightly later on the Lullingstone stags and later still on the figure of the calf in the Book of Durrow.

The seeds that grew into the Pictish symbolic system were undoubtedly planted in the La Tène period. Thomas lays particular stress on the conserving nature of Pictish society.<sup>311</sup> Indeed, the Picts do seem to have preserved enough of a pre-Indo-European language to use it in



inscriptions. Some sort of matrilinear system appears to have survived, at least in nomenclature, into the seventh century, and they remembered enough of the techniques used in the great metalwork of their first and second century ancestors to use them again on the Norrie's Law repoussé plaque, but their apparently heterogenous culture would have required a considerable degree of political homogeneity before such a universal system of symbols could possibly have obtained throughout Pictland north and south of the Mounth and east and west of Druimalban. The pre-symbol stone evolution of the various symbols may well be different in each case but they did not appear in their extant earliest forms in stone before the end of the sixth century.

Stevenson's late date of c. 700 for the emergence of the symbol series rests on his assumption that the entire Pictish symbolic system depended for its inspiration on Evangelist symbols in Hiberno-Saxon manuscripts,<sup>312</sup> an argument that belies the stylistic dating of the Golspie Crescent, isolated as prototypical by Stevenson's own typology. Nor can one readily accept the three animals and the one human figure that comprise the four Evangelist symbols as the precursors of the Crescent and V-rod, the Double Disc and Z-rod, the Flower symbol and the whole panoply of Pictish geometric symbols. As Henderson succinctly states: "it seems much more probable that the naturalistic features of the vigorous animal art of Pictland" gave rise to the style of the animal Evangelist symbols than it does that the Picts "extracted" a few meagre details from a Hiberno-Saxon manuscript "and proceeded to turn them into symbols of widespread social significance".<sup>313</sup>

Wherever the old La Tène style may have been retained, revived or further developed, it seems to have been imported into Pictland anew before it could be shown in hair-spring spirals against an enamel background on the Gaulcross and Norrie's Law hand-pins. The linear



Celtic style of the late sixth and early seventh centuries could have reached Pictland by a number of routes. The rise of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Bernicia in formerly British territory in the second half of the sixth century, the death of Urien of Rheged towards the end of the century, the defeat of the Gododdin at Catraeth c. 600, and the conquest of the British kingdom of Elmet by Edwin of Northumbria<sup>314</sup> all provide an excellent context for British artisans fleeing to the comparative safety of powerful Pictish patrons. The same art is found in metalwork in Ireland in the sixth century and the Scottish kingdom of Dál Riata could also have served as a conduit for the transmission of motifs to Pictland. The Cathach of St. Columba, preserved by the O'Donnells, descendants of Columba's own Cenél Conaill branch of the Uí Néill, features Celtic trumpet spirals, scrolls and peltas. E. A. Lowe first dated it to the second half of the sixth century and later to the first half of the seventh century, but continued to admit that an early date, in the lifetime of Columba, "is palaeographically possible".<sup>315</sup> The early seventh-century date now customarily assigned the Cathach depends to a great extent upon David Wright, who dated it to the 630s because of the similarities between its decoration and the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl escutcheons, a date which depended in turn on Francoise Henry, who linked the large Sutton Hoo bowl to Furse's establishment of an Irish monastery in East Anglia c. 636, a date now rendered impossible for the bowl by the c. 625 date for the Sutton Hoo burial established since Wright wrote in 1964.<sup>316</sup> The bowl itself was repaired some time before being deposited in the ship-burial and is approximately datable to c. 600.<sup>317</sup> At any rate, the linear style of Celtic enamel work found in Britain and Ireland in the second half of the sixth century reached Pictland by c. 600. The Pictish hand-pins and the undeniable facility with which the Golspie Crescent was designed and executed

strongly suggest that, although the Picts might not have participated in the initial revitalisation of the La Tène style, they quickly became aware of its resuscitation and expert in its production. Some similar impetus also prompted a Pictish metalworker to resurrect the repoussé technique of his Caledonian forebears and to put it to work on the Norrie's Law repoussé plaque, and led to the recollection of the interior lobes of the type found in the decoration of the deer on the Bragar sherd from Lewis, recalled and recast as the interior body scrolls of Pictish Class I animals.

#### Pictish Symbol Stones in the West Highlands and Islands

The place in the typological sequence of the Pictish symbols found west of Druimalban supports a c. 600 date for the emergence of the symbol series. Alcock and Thomas lament the inability of the typological approach to tell us the meaning of the symbols and the purpose of the symbol stones,<sup>318</sup> but it permits us to place the symbol stones west of Druimalban in sequence. Typologies have not previously been presented for several of the symbols found in the west. Isabel Henderson has established that the earliest prototypical examples of the Crescent, V-rod, the Pictish Beast, the Pictish Bull, and the Notched Rectangle symbols are in the north, centred on the Moray Firth.<sup>319</sup> The typology of the Rectangle symbol, we shall see, also supports a northern origin for the symbol stone series. Stevenson concedes that the Crescent and the Pictish Beast may not have originated at the same time.<sup>320</sup> The difficult typology of the Double Disc and Z-rod suggests that all symbols may not have originated at the same time nor in the same place. More importantly, for purposes of this study, the typologies of the symbols found west of Druimalban help us to establish just how "peripheral" the Pictish western province really was, in light of the

archaeological, place-name and historical evidence. Descriptions of the eight Pictish symbol stones in the West Highlands and Islands are given below, followed by typologies of the symbols carved upon them and a discussion of their implications.

### Class I Symbol Stones

#### 1. Strome Shunnamal, Benbecula (fig. 1a)

Found by Alexander Carmichael in the nineteenth century in "Strome Shunnamal, or the "Stronce or Sound of Sunnamal", which is uncovered by the sea at low tide, the stone displays two Pictish symbols, the Circular Disc and the Rectangle, and is now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (No. IB 37). Sunnamal is a small island east of the north-western part of Benbecula known as An Tom and thus not northeast of Benbecula, as stated by Carmichael and repeated by Romilly Allen.<sup>321</sup>

#### 2. Fiskavaig Bay, Bracadale, Skye (pl. 3)

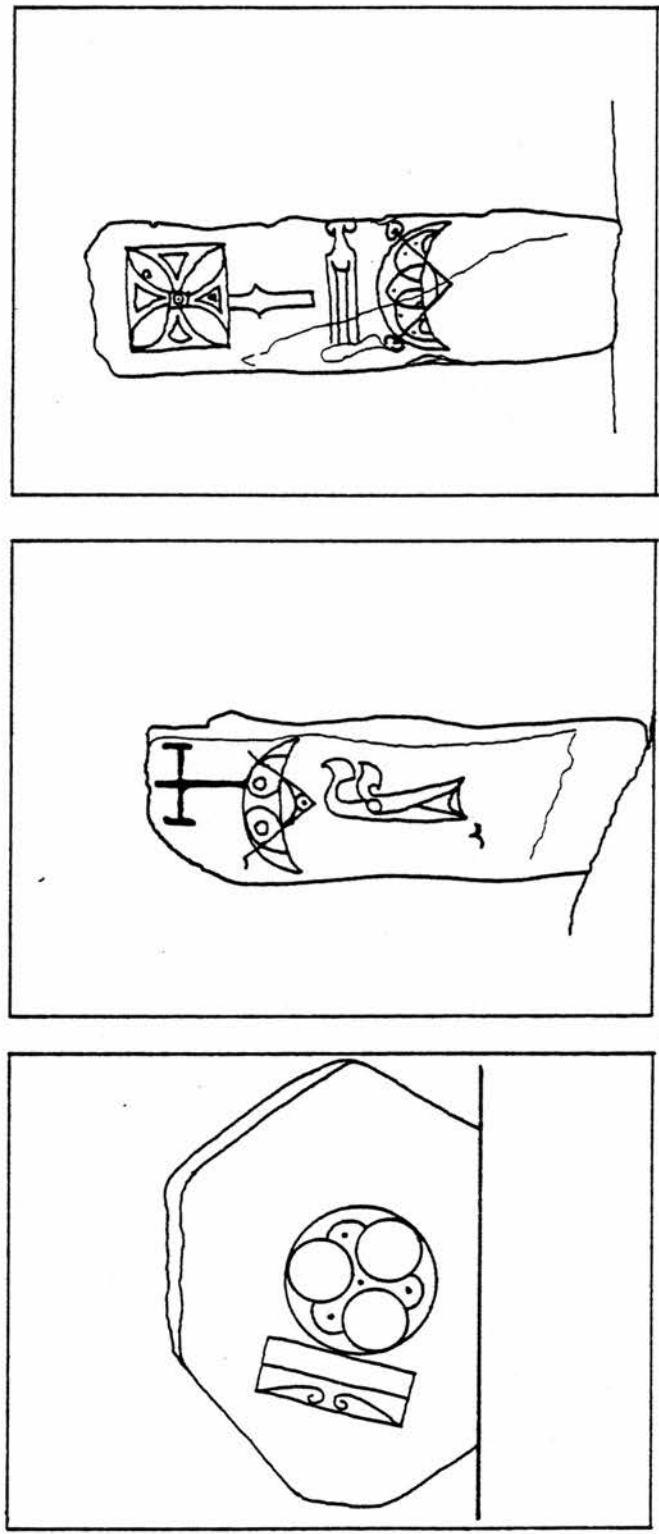
Now in the National Museum of Antiquities (No. IB 213), this stone was found on the shore of Fiskavaig Bay and shows the Double Disc and Z-rod over the Crescent and V-rod.<sup>322</sup>

#### 3. Clach Ard, Tote, Skye (pl. 4)

Known in Gaelic as Clach Ard or the "Tall Stone", it remains standing in the township of Tote, less than a mile from Skeabost Bridge.<sup>323</sup> It is decorated with three sets of Pictish symbols: the Crescent and V-rod, the Double Disc and Z-rod and the Mirror and Comb.

#### 4. Tobar na Maor, near Dun Osdale, Skye (pl. 5)

Now preserved in Dunvegan Castle, the Tobar na Maor stone shows the Crescent and V-rod over two concentric circles.<sup>324</sup> It was found at the well of Tobar na Maor near the Dun Osdale broch to the west of Loch Dunvegan. Stevenson has established that the circles are complete in themselves and are not the remains of a damaged Double Disc symbol.<sup>325</sup>



(a) STROME SHUNNAMAL, BENBECULA. (ECHS:1142) (b) PABBAY. (ECMS:116) (c) RAAGAY. (PSAS 41, p. 436)

FIG. 1  
THREE SYMBOL STONES IN THE WESTERN ISLES.

## Animal Stones

### 1. Gairloch (pl. 6)

An undressed slab, formerly at Flowerdale House, now in the parish church at Gairloch, shows the incised figure of a bird above a fish. The top part of the stone is missing and with it the bird's head, upper breast and most of its wing. Both figures are shown in profile and face left. Stevenson identified the bird as an eagle, but Thomas insists that the Gairloch bird is a goose.<sup>326</sup>

### 2. Dunadd (pl. 7)

The Dunadd boar was published in reports of excavation of the Dunadd hill-fort.<sup>327</sup> Cecil Curle was the first to identify it in print as Pictish and to suggest that it may have been carved by a Pictish "raiding party" after the establishment of Gaelic hegemony in Argyll.<sup>328</sup> In an article co-authored with Francoise Henry, Mrs. Curle described the Dunadd boar as the "masterpiece" of Class I animal carvings.<sup>329</sup> Professor Thomas, Raleigh Radford and, most recently, Dr. Alan Lane accept it as Pictish<sup>330</sup> but Professor Alcock has misgivings and has argued that the Scots of Dal Riata would have been unlikely to preserve a Pictish graffito demonstrative of a Scottish defeat.<sup>331</sup> Graham and Anna Ritchie share Alcock's doubts and feel that the Dunadd boar is "not quite" in the Pictish style.<sup>332</sup>

## Incised Symbol Stones with Crosses

### 1. Bàgh Ban, Pabbay (fig. 1b)

First published by Joseph Anderson, whose attention was drawn to it by Father Allan Macdonald, priest in Dalibrog, South Uist, the Pabbay stone bears the Crescent and V-rod over the Flower symbol.<sup>333</sup> A cross is incised with its base placed slightly to the right of the centre of the upper arc of the Crescent. The arms of the cross are expanded.

The top of the cross has worn away. Mrs. Curle decided that the cross was "probably added subsequently to the carving of the symbols".<sup>334</sup>

## 2. Raasay House, Raasay (fig. 1c)

The dressed slab decorated on one side with two incised Pictish symbols and a cross in a square, now on the roadside near Raasay House but formerly near the old pier, has excited interest because of the form of cross employed.<sup>335</sup> The cross is described by four arcs arising from the ends of each side of the square, slightly flattened at the middle so they do not intersect at the mid-point of the square, and a circular device is set in the small central space thus created. A small hook projects from the right side of the top arm of the cross, rendering the whole a Chi-Rho. The square containing the Chi-Rho is provided with a shaft and will be considered more fully in the next chapter. Below the cross are two Pictish symbols: a Crescent and V-rod at the bottom and, above it, the symbol Romilly Allen called a Notched Rectangle with Curved End, otherwise known as the "tuning-fork" symbol. The stone has been trimmed at some point in its history, losing part of the "tuning-fork" terminal and part of the point of the V-rod.

## Discussion

Eight Pictish symbols and three animals are represented west of Druimalban. Of these, the Crescent and V-rod and the Double Disc and Z-rod have the highest incidence, as one would expect of these, the most common Pictish symbols. The Crescent and V-rod occurs five times, the Double Disc and Z-rod twice. The Rectangle, the Notched Rectangle with Curved End or "tuning-fork", the Flower symbol, the Boar, the Fish, the Eagle, and the Mirror and Comb all occur once. The concentric circles on the Tobar na Maor stone and the Circular Disc on the stone from Benbecula are differently decorated and may either be two versions of

the same symbol or two entirely separate and distinct symbols.

### Crescent and V-rod

All of the Crescent and V-rod symbols west of Druimalban figured in Stevenson's original typology of the Crescent symbol (pl. 8: C2, C6, C11, C12, C14). All five are examples of the "Dome and Wing" group (column C) and, like those decorated with scrolls and spirals (column B), are typologically later than the "Pelta" group (column A), of which the Golspie Crescent (A1) is the closest to the prototype. Stevenson has clearly demonstrated that the "Pelta" group displays most of the features found in the "Scrolls and Spirals" and the "Dome and Wing" groups.<sup>336</sup> Stevenson's typological chart gives the Crescent on Clynekirkton, Sutherland No. 1 (pl. 8, C1) as the best extant prototype of the "Dome and Wing" series. Isabel Henderson has shown that the V-rod prototype was characterised by a "blunt fish-tail end and a sharp arrow head",<sup>337</sup> precisely the form found at Clynekirkton, although the Clynekirkton terminals are a somewhat simplified version of those on the V-rod of the prototypical Golspie stone. The derivation of the "Dome and Wing" series from the original pelta-decorated Crescent probably took place not long after the symbols came into general use.<sup>338</sup> The "wings" on the Raasay Crescent (pl. 8, C2) have the appearance of peltas with elongated stems and side-terminals, partially cut off by the Crescent shape, as do the Clynekirkton "wings", but the central "dome" of the Raasay Crescent is pointed, in contrast to the rounded "dome" of the Clynekirkton prototype. The central "dome" of the Tobar na Maor Crescent is also pointed (pl. 8, C12), but its "wings" have completely lost any resemblance to the pelta. The Raasay Crescent is later than Clynekirkton but not much so, since its "wings" still resemble peltas. Tobar na Maor is fairly late in the series. The Pabbay Crescent has no "dome" at all



and its "wings" have been reduced to teardrop shapes, with circles placed near their rounded ends (pl. 8, C11), making it roughly contemporary with, or more probably a bit later than Tobar na Maor. The Clach Ard Crescent (pl. 8, C14) is the crudest of the "Dome and Wing" series and thus typologically one of the last of all such Crescents. The decoration of the Fiskavaig Crescent (pl. 8, C6) is unfinished. Its one completed "wing" resembles a pelta with pointed stem and side-terminals, a later development from the broad-stemmed peltas of the Clynekirkton and Raasay "wings". Pock-marks, apparent to the touch, indicate the positions of the outer point of the right wing and its left-hand curve on the underside of the Crescent. The terminal on the left of the Fiskavaig V-rod has already departed from the "blunt fish-tail end" of the prototype but the other terminal was never incised.

#### Double Disc and Z-rod (figs. 2 and 3)

Double Discs and Z-rods are depicted at Fiskavaig (pl. 3) and on Clach Ard (pl. 4) and are considered here in relation to surviving examples on Class I stones. A number of crude other examples of the Double Disc and the Double Disc and Z-rod survive in the Fife caves and on the cast of a lost stone fragment from Nonikiln in Ross-shire,<sup>339</sup> on two stones at Banchory House in Aberdeenshire, a sandstone disc from Jarlshof in Shetland, and, possibly, on an ogham stone at Auquhollie, Kincardineshire, although this last is doubtful.<sup>340</sup> Of the Double Discs in the Doo Cave, Jonathan's Cave and the Sloping Cave, all near East Wemyss in Fife, only one, in the Doo Cave, has a Z-rod, both ends of which have points, a late feature.<sup>341</sup> The Doo Cave Z-rod and the Z-rod on the Jarlshof sandstone disc<sup>342</sup> have wide angles, another late feature. Isabel Henderson has identified as typologically late the Z-rod terminals of the Double Disc and Z-rod symbols on the two

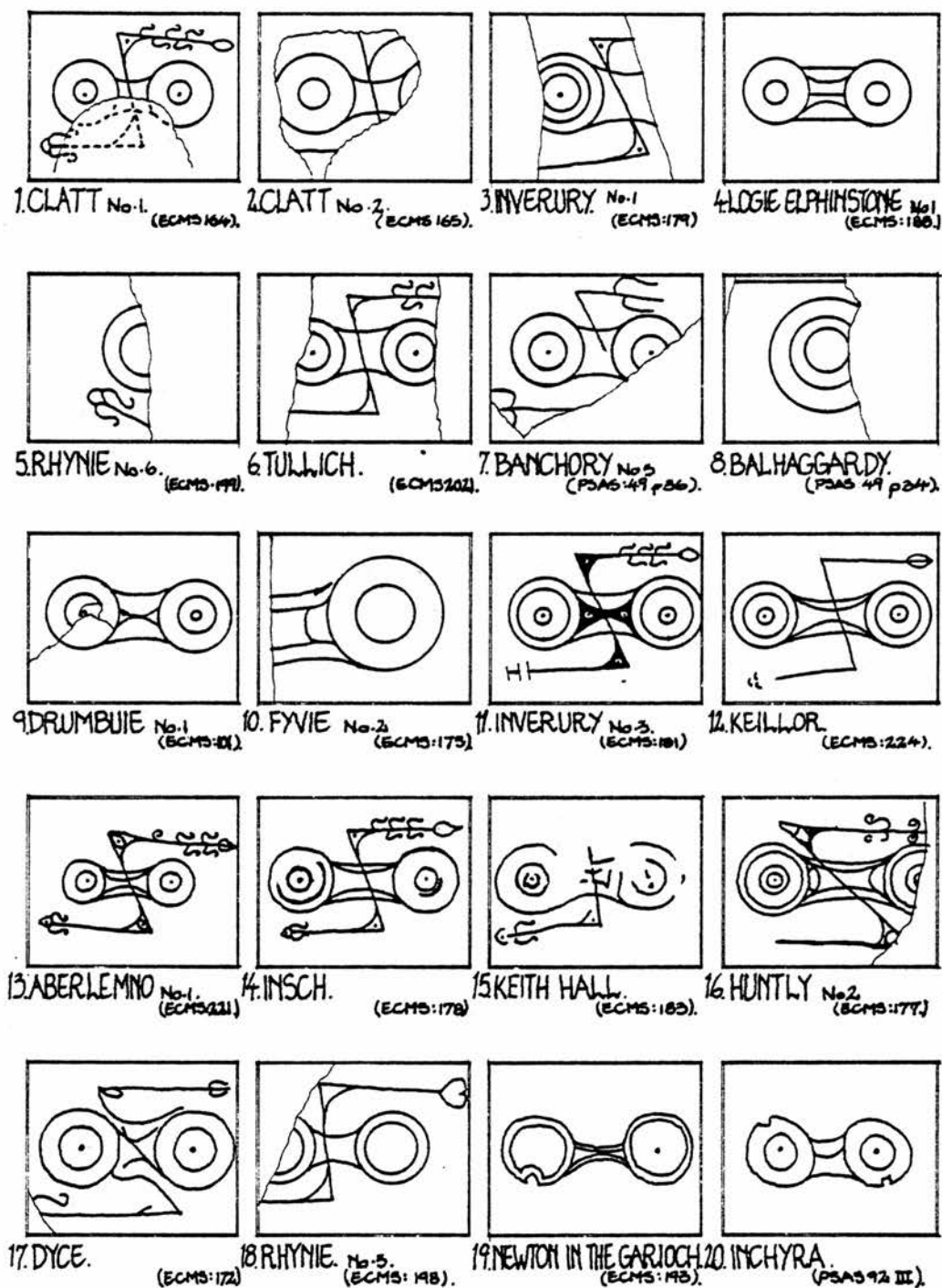
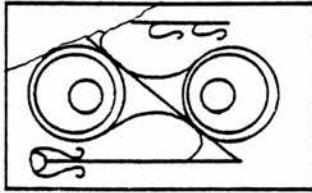
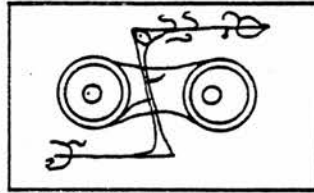


FIG. 2 DOUBLE DISC AND DOUBLE DISC AND Z-ROD SYMBOLS



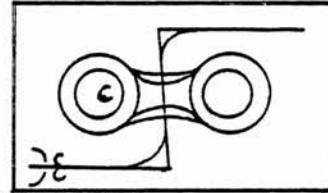
1. DINGWALL.

(ECMS:55)



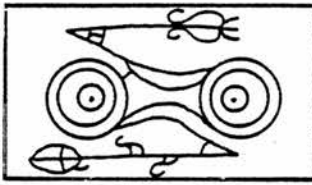
2. INVEREEN.

(PSAS68.p.56)



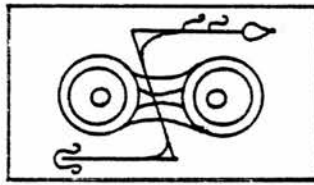
3. EDDERTON.

(ECMS:56)



4. CONGASH

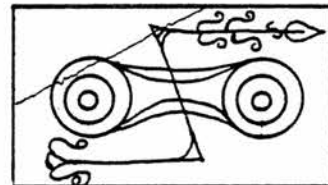
(ECMS:99)



5. TILLYTARMONT. No 2

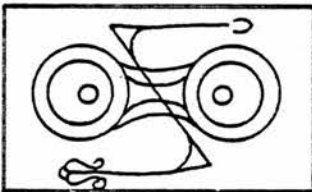
(PSAS:88)

ILL-2)



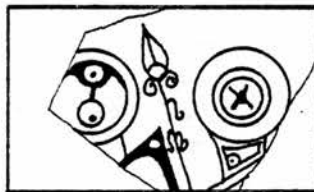
6. KINTORE No 2

(ECMS:186)



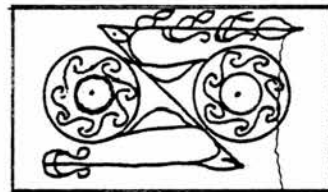
7. STROWAN.

(ECMS:303)



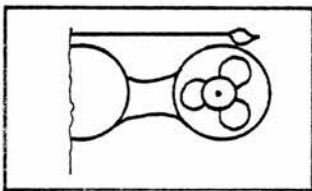
8. MONIACK.

(ECMS:110)



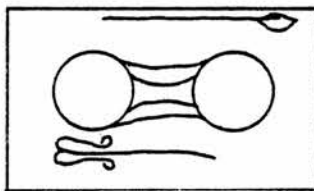
9. DUNNICHEN.

(ECMS:223)



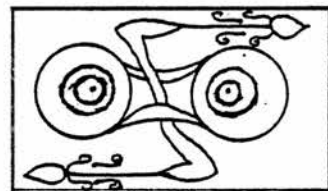
10. BOURTIE.

(ECMS:163)



11. LOGIE ELPHINSTONE. 2.

(ECMS:189)



12. ANWOTH.

(ECMS:508)

FIG. 3 LATE DOUBLE DISC AND Z-ROD SYMBOLS

enamelled plaques from the Norrie's Law hoard and on the terminal ring of the massive silver chain from Whitecleugh in Lanarkshire. All three have points on both ends, "whereas in the standard design the floriated end is pointed and the plain section is finished off with a blunt lyre-shaped terminal", as Professor Thomas has established.<sup>343</sup> The angles of the Z-rods on the Norrie's Law plaques and on the Whitecleugh chain are wide, as are those on the Doo Cave Z-rod and the Jarlshof sandstone disc. The Z-rod on Banchory House No. 2, formerly at Dimmacair near Stonehaven, displays unusual floriation and the lines of the connecting bar between its Double Discs are convex rather than concave,<sup>344</sup> as is also the case with the Sloping Cave Double Disc and one each in the Doo Cave and Jonathan's Cave.<sup>345</sup> The connecting bars of the Double Discs in the Court Cave, also in Fife, are crossed by possibly abbreviated Z-rods, one of which appears to be a straight line with one lyre-shaped terminal, the other a very flattened Z-rod with one circular terminal.<sup>346</sup> Central dots are provided for the discs on Banchory House Nos. 2 and 4,<sup>347</sup> the Sloping Cave and Court Cave Double Discs, and one in Jonathan's Cave.<sup>348</sup> None of these examples offers much information about the typology or the decoration of Double Discs and Z-rods and all may be dismissed from further consideration.

Thirty-seven other Double Disc symbols survive from Class I,<sup>349</sup> including the "erased" Double Disc of Logie Elphinstone No. 2, obscured by the carvings of later symbols on the stone,<sup>350</sup> including a Double Disc and Z-rod (fig. 3.11). Of these, seven have no Z-rod: Drumbuie No. 1 (fig. 2.9), Fyvie No. 2 (fig. 2.10), Logie Elphinstone No. 1 (fig. 2.4), Newton in the Garioch (fig. 2.19), Inchyra (fig. 2.20), Westfield Farm,<sup>351</sup> and the "erased" Double Disc of Logie Elphinstone No. 2. That leaves thirty Class I Double Discs with Z-rods.

Charles Thomas's typology for the Z-rod, apparently accepted by

Isabel Henderson, shows that the classic form displayed floriation consisting of five "curlicues", placed alternately on either side of the shaft of the Z-rod, near the pointed terminal and flowing in its direction, with a "blunt lyre-shaped terminal" on the other end.<sup>352</sup> The curlicues of one of the pairs in the floriation of the Z-rods at Kintore No. 2 (fig. 3.6) and one pair on Aberlemno No. 1 (fig. 2.13) are set opposite each other along the Z-rod, as is also the case for one pair of curlicues on the Z-rods at Inch in Aberdeenshire (fig. 2.14) and on the Class I Edinburgh stone. The wide angles of the Edinburgh Z-rod probably indicate lateness. Charles Thomas would make the Edinburgh stone stylistically early and placed it in the sixth century, but there is no satisfying historical evidence for a sixth century Pictish presence in the territory of the British Goddodin. C. A. Ralegh Radford's ascription of the Edinburgh stone to the period following Durnichen and the subsequent Northumbrian withdrawal is more acceptable on both typological and historical grounds.<sup>353</sup> Floriation facing away from, rather than towards the point, is found on Z-rods at Invereen (fig. 3.2) and Moniack (fig. 3.8) in Inverness-shire and on Huntly No. 2 (fig. 2.16) in Aberdeenshire. Wrong-way floriation is also found on both terminals of the Z-rod carved in living rock on Trusty's Hill, near Arwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire (fig. 3.12), which penetrates the connecting bar between the Double Discs, late features that argue against an early Pictish presence in Galloway, as Henderson has noted.<sup>354</sup> Ralegh Radford dates the Arwoth symbols to the period following Durnichen and suggests it commemorates a Pictish leader who fell besieging the Dark Age hill-fort on Trusty's Hill, whoever its inhabitants may have been.<sup>355</sup> The line of the Arwoth Z-rod has been thickened by the addition of another incised line running along its length, a detail otherwise found in Class I only at Invereen (fig. 3.2)

and on the Z-rod placed over a Notched Rectangle at Inverallan in Inverness-shire.<sup>356</sup> The Inverallan and Fiskavaig (pl. 3) Z-rods have fish-tail terminals in place of the customary lyre-shapes, demonstrating a confusion between V-rod and Z-rod terminals that is to be expected of late Class I examples. The Z-rods of all Class I Notched Rectangles and Z-rods, where both Z-rod terminals survive, show similar late features,<sup>357</sup> in comparison to Z-rods paired with Double Discs. A heart-shaped terminal decorates one end of the Rhynie No. 5 Z-rod (fig. 2.18), which modifies a Double Disc symbol. Of the remaining Class I Z-rods over Double Discs, Clatt No. 1 (fig. 2.1) and Dunnichen (fig. 3.9) have the best surviving examples of the classic form of the Z-rod, although the Dunnichen Double Disc symbol is typologically late.

Dunnichen has the only Class I Double Disc symbol whose discs are decorated with running spirals, seen as an indication of lateness by Stevenson and Henderson.<sup>358</sup> The Dunnichen Double Disc spirals fill in the space between the circumference of the discs and an inner circle within each disc that is further decorated with a central dot. The inner circles are not concentric with the outer discs, however, but are each placed a bit closer to the other disc. The two inner circles within the discs of the Arwoth Double Disc (fig. 3.12) are not quite concentric, nor do the central dots serve as the exact centre points of the inner or outer discs. Instead, the centre point of each successively smaller circle is placed slightly closer to the other disc, so that the decoration seems to radiate out from the inner side of each disc. Dunnichen and Arwoth are late in the series. Non-concentric circles may, therefore, indicate lateness.

Double Disc symbols with non-concentric circles are found at Strowan in Perthshire (fig. 3.7), in Aberdeenshire at Tillytarmont No. 2 (fig. 3.5) and Kintore No. 2 (fig. 3.6), in Easter Ross at Dingwall



(fig. 3.1) and at least one of the two discs on the Edderton stone (fig. 3.3), and on Congash No. 2 (fig. 3.4) and Invereen (fig. 3.2) in Inverness-shire. A fragmentary stone at Moniack Castle in Inverness-shire (fig. 3.8) bears one surviving disc from each of two original Double Discs and Z-rods. One disc has concentric circles and a central incised dot, from which radiate four incised lines, forming an X. The other disc has an inner ring just outside and concentric with the outer disc and a non-concentric circle and dot, each placed successively closer to the lost other disc of the same symbol, which are connected by an incised line to another, smaller circle and dot near the outside edge of the remaining disc, suggesting a Double Disc symbol with discs of different sizes. Moniack, too, is a late example. Clach Ard (pl. 4) has a concentric ring with small non-concentric interior circles and dots and is thus typologically late.

Concentric circles are found within the discs of Double Disc symbols on Druimbuie No. 1 in Inverness-shire (fig. 2.9), Inchyra in Perthshire (fig. 2.20) and Keillor in Forfarshire (fig. 2.12). The one complete surviving disc of the Westfield Farm stone from Fife has a central incised point and an inner circle concentric with the outer disc, but the semicircle placed on the inside of the outer disc, near to the connecting bar, is unique in Class I.<sup>359</sup> A number of concentric circle-decorated Double Discs are found in Aberdeenshire: Banchory House No. 5 (fig. 2.7),<sup>360</sup> Clatt Nos. 1 and 2 (fig. 2.1-2), Dyce (fig. 2.17), East Balhaggardy (fig. 2.8), Fyvie No. 2 (fig. 2.10), Huntly No. 2 (fig. 2.16), Inch (fig. 2.14), Inverury No. 1 (fig. 2.3) and No. 3 (fig. 2.11), Keith Hall (fig. 2.15), Logie Elphinstone No. 1 (fig. 2.4), Newton in the Garioch (fig. 2.19), Rhynie No. 5 (fig. 2.18) and No. 6 (fig. 2.5) and Tullich (fig. 2.6). The nineteen Class I stones with Double Disc symbols ornamented with concentric circles include all five

that have no Z-rod, whose names are given above. Three of the fifteen Class I Double Disc and Z-rod symbols whose discs have concentric circles display Z-rods with late features. Aberlemno No. 1 has opposing rather than alternating curlicues in its floriation. Rhynie No. 5 has a heart-shaped terminal. Huntly No. 2 has wrong-way floriation. Twelve Class I Double Disc and Z-rod symbols remain whose discs have concentric circles, including Clatt No. 1, whose Z-rod terminals are among the closest to the prototype. Confirmation of the typological earliness of Double Disc symbols with concentric rings is provided by Logie Elphinstone No. 2, whose "erased" Double Disc had inner rings concentric with the discs.<sup>361</sup>

Only two Class I Double Disc symbols have no interior decoration, Fiskavaig (pl. 3) and the second of the two Double Discs carved on Logie Elphinstone No. 2 (fig. 3.11). Fiskavaig is unfinished and it is impossible to determine if the sculptor meant to include disc decoration, although it seems likely, even if it was only to be in paint. The Z-rod of Logie Elphinstone No. 2 has no central element but the Crescent symbol on the same stone does have interior decoration. Its Double Disc and Z-rod may be highly stylised or incomplete.

A Class I stone at Bourtie in Aberdeenshire (fig. 3.10) features a Double Disc with unique ornamentation: a "trefoil" pattern composed of circles. The sole example of its type, the Bourtie Double Disc has borrowed the features of the Circular Disc symbol, an example of which may be seen on the Benbecula stone (fig. 1a).

Good examples of typologically early Double Disc symbols, those with concentric circles, are seen without Z-rods at Drumbuie No. 1 (fig. 2.9) and Fyvie No. 2 (fig. 2.10). Double Disc symbols with concentric circles and correspondingly early Z-rods are found only in Aberdeenshire, on Clatt No. 1 (fig. 2.1), Inverury No. 3 (fig. 2.11), Tullich (fig. 2.6), and possibly Rhynie No. 6 (fig. 2.5), although only

the lyre-shaped terminal of its Z-rod remains. The Class I examples in the area where we should expect to find the example closest to the prototype of both Double Disc and Z-rod are Dingwall (fig. 3.1) and Edderton (fig. 3.3) in Easter Ross, both of whose Double Discs have non-concentric circles, although Dingwall seems to have correct if damaged Z-rod terminals; Drumbuie No. 1 on Urquhart Bay (fig. 2.9), which has concentric circles but no Z-rod, and Moniack (fig. 3.8), originally from the Black Isle but a late example. An incised Double Disc on a Class II stone is, however, to be found at Golspie with concentric circles but no Z-rod.<sup>362</sup>

No clearly prototypical Double Disc and Z-rod has been found on the shores of the Moray Firth or in the neighbouring districts. The Double Disc symbol may have been very ancient indeed when it first appeared on Class I stones, as Professor Thomas believes,<sup>363</sup> in which case the prototype must be sought in pre-Pictish art. Within the context of Pictish art alone, however, it is impossible to point to a prototype in the Moray Firth area. The Double Disc and Z-rod must have originated elsewhere, unless its prototype has been lost or remains to be found in the same area where prototypical Pictish symbols are usually found.

The two Class I Hebridean stones with Double Discs and Z-rods, Fiskavaig (pl. 3) and Clach Ard (pl. 4), also have Crescents and V-rods. As we have seen, the decoration of the Crescents on both stones is typologically late, Clach Ard perhaps more so than Fiskavaig. It was customary for Class I symbols to be incised on the flattest side of an undressed stone, but the Clach Ard is incised on an unusually rough surface, which may reflect unfairly on the abilities of its sculptor. The one surviving terminal and the angles of its Z-rod are finely carved, however, suggesting that the rather inept interior decoration of its

Crescent may have been completed by a second, less skilful sculptor. The non-concentric circles of its Double Disc are typologically late. The Fiskavaig stone is more readable because it is smooth and flat on its incised side. Floriation is indicated on the Clach Ard Z-rod, although its other terminal is lost. There is no floriation on the Z-rod of the unfinished Fiskavaig stone, but one of its terminals suggests the outline of a V-rod fish-tail terminal. The Crescents and V-rods and Double Discs and Z-rods at Fiskavaig and Clach Ard are all typologically late. The Mirror and Comb on Clach Ard are barely recognisable due to wear and provide insufficient information for comparative purposes.

#### Circular Disc (fig. 4)

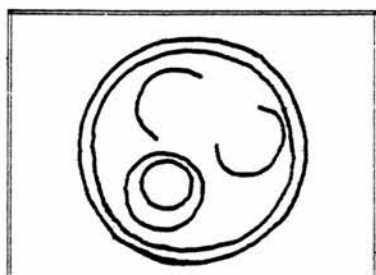
The Tobar na Maor (pl. 5) and Benbecula (fig. 1a) stones display single discs. The latter was identified by Romilly Allen as an example of the Circular Disc symbol, which he characterised as a disc "enclosing three smaller discs joined by three curved lines, and the space thus formed in the middle ornamented with four small dots"<sup>364</sup> (fig. 4.2). No examples of this symbol have been found since the publication of The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, in which Romilly Allen listed six Class I and one Class II Circular Disc symbols.<sup>365</sup> In addition to Benbecula, the other five Class I examples are found on one side of the Dingwall stone in Ross-shire, whose Double Disc and Z-rod, carved on its opposite side (fig. 3.1), is discussed above; on Knockando No. 1 in Elginshire, at Balneilan in Banffshire, and at Kinellar and Rothiebrisdane in Aberdeenshire.

The Knockando Circular Disc (fig. 4.6) has two small concentric circles at its centre, from which thirteen lines radiate out to the edge of the symbol. Fifteen radiating lines provide similar decoration for the one surviving disc of an incised Double Disc and Z-rod on a Class II

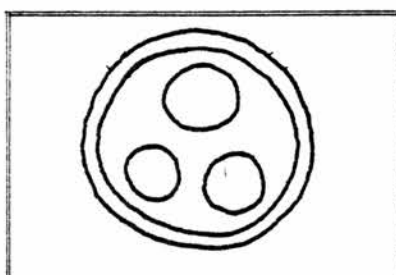
stone, so designated because it has a decorated incised cross on its other side, at Alyth in Perthshire.<sup>366</sup> Professor Thomas believes that the Knockando Circular Disc represents a twelve-spoked chariot wheel, the thirteenth spoke having been added by mistake.<sup>367</sup> If so, the Knockando Circular Disc might depict the wheel of a La Tène period war chariot,<sup>368</sup> several centuries after there is any clear evidence for the military use of such vehicles. Adomnán, however, distinguishes between two types of horse-drawn vehicles: the currus or curriculum and the plaustrum; and reports that a king of the Irish Cruithni, the Dál nAraide, escaped from a lost battle in the late sixth century in a currus.<sup>369</sup> A two-horse wagon or cart, possibly analogous to Adomnán's plaustrum, was sculpted in relief on a lost slab, Meigle 10 in Perthshire, a conveyance commodious enough to accommodate a seated driver and two seated passengers, at least one of whom was female.<sup>370</sup> At any rate, the decoration of the Knockando Circular Disc is unique in Class I and its two Crescents are both of the typologically late "Dome and Wing" group (pl. 8, C10).

The outer ring and three interior circles of the Balneilan Circular Disc, the only discernible symbol on the stone, have double incised outlines (fig. 4.1). The three interior circles of the Circular Disc on the Rothiebrisdane stone, moved to Fyvie, are defined by a single continuous line and its outer ring is described by double incised lines, slightly flattened on one side (fig. 4.4). The three circles within the Kinellar Circular Disc have central dots, with curved-sided triangular pendentives in the spaces between the three circles (fig. 4.5). The decoration of the Crescent on the Kinellar stone is typologically late in the "Scrolls or Spirals" group (pl. 8, B8). Only the three interior circles are shown on the Dingwall stone, without the outer disc (fig. 4.3).

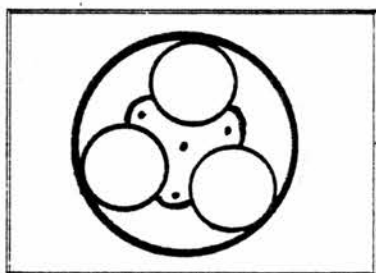
Romilly Allen's statistics in Part II of The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland give Aberlemno No. 2 as the sole Class II stone



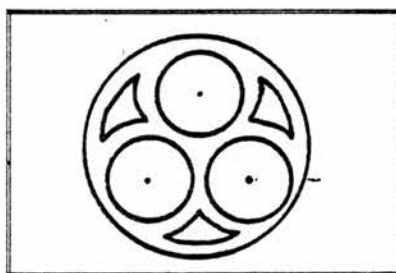
1 BALNEILEAN (SSS 21, CT9)



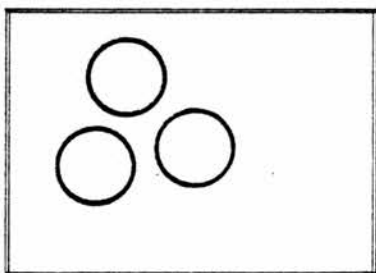
4 ROTHIE BRISBANE (PSAS 49p 42)



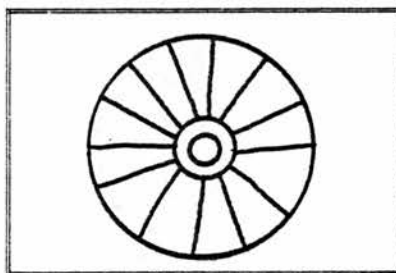
2 BENBECULA. (ECMS 114)



5 KINELLAR. (ECMS 184)



3 DINGWALL. (ECMS 55)



6 KNOCKANDO. No 1 (ECMS 132)

FIG. 4 CIRCULAR DISC SYMBOLS



with a Circular Disc symbol.<sup>371</sup> In his description of the stone in Part II, however, he identifies the symbol in the upper right on the back of Aberlemno No. 2 as "the triple circular disc symbol", more precisely called Triple Disc and Cross Bar in Part II,<sup>372</sup> a different symbol altogether from the Circular Disc. Confusion seems to have arisen because of the description of the circular object between the topmost two mounted figures on the back of the slab: "a circular disc like a shield with a boss in the centre".<sup>373</sup> The object in question is manifestly a shield, round like all the others shown on Aberlemno No. 2, and is part of the debris of the battle depicted on the slab. The Circular Disc symbol is relatively rare and its use confined to Class I. The Benbecula example is the only one to have its inner three circles connected by curved lines but it is impossible to arrive at a typological sequence with so few examples.

Professor Thomas has noted that the three interior circles of the Balneilan, Rothiebrishbane, Kinellar and Benbecula Circular Discs "superficially" recall the decoration of British La Tène bronze mirrors, especially the Mayer Mirror.<sup>374</sup> Indeed, the slightly flattened ring of the Rothiebrishbane Circular Disc (fig. 4.4) is reminiscent of the shape of the Desborough mirror, among other.<sup>375</sup> Thomas prefers to see discs as sun symbols, a view he believes to be supported by the wheel-like decoration of the Knockando Circular Disc (fig. 4.6) and the fact that the wheel was an attribute of the Gaulish and British god Taranis, the "Thunderer".<sup>376</sup> In any event, the Picts had their own Mirror symbol.

### Concentric Circles

The Tobar na Maor stone (pl. 5) features two concentric circles around a central circular hub, in addition to its Crescent and V-rod. No other Class I stone gives a clear example of a circular symbol

of this type, although one may have been incised on Tillytarmont No. 3, which also has a Crescent but no V-rod.<sup>377</sup> It is tempting, therefore, to assume that the concentric circles on both stones are part of unfinished Double Discs, Mirrors or "Mirror Case" symbols. Two concentric circles are, however, carved on the wall of the King's Cove Cave in Arran,<sup>378</sup> but Arran was not part of Pictland proper after the Dalriadic takeover of Argyll, its inhabitants were probably non-Pictish P-Celts before that and no other Pictish symbols are found in Arran. Two incised circles have also been found on a stone recently removed from a wall and set up as a "standing stone" on Inch Kenneth, a small island off the west coast of Mull.<sup>379</sup> The circles are so finely carved that the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland would only remark that there is "not sufficient evidence" to show that they "are of prehistoric date".<sup>380</sup> In the Pictish "heartland", a single circle with central dot is carved next to two "horseshoe" symbols and a Double Disc in the Doo Cave in Fife.<sup>381</sup>

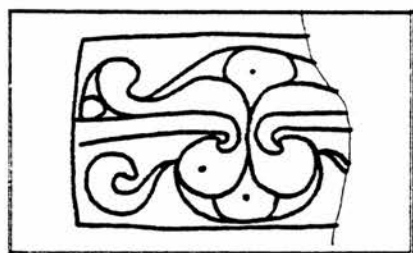
A unique single disc and Z-rod, executed in *champlevé* enamel, appear on the back of one of the Norrie's Law hand-pins.<sup>382</sup> Stevenson realised that the symbols were engraved before the pin was attached and that the Z-rod, with its late floriation, is complete.<sup>383</sup> Early illustrations did not include the central element of the Z-rod and Joseph Anderson thought the whole to be an incomplete Double Disc and Z-rod.<sup>384</sup> Dr. Henderson has tentatively suggested that the combination of a single disc and Z-rod on the Norrie's Law hand-pin might be a "classic version" of an unknown symbol which was used on dress ornaments.<sup>385</sup> No Z-rod appears on either the Tobar na Maor stone or Tillytarmont No. 3, however, and the extant evidence is too meagre to determine if the concentric circles constitute a variant of the Circular Disc symbol or a different symbol entirely. Stevenson has shown that

the Tobar na Maor concentric circles symbol is "complete as it is", in view of its size and position on the stone, and not part of another unfinished symbol.<sup>386</sup>

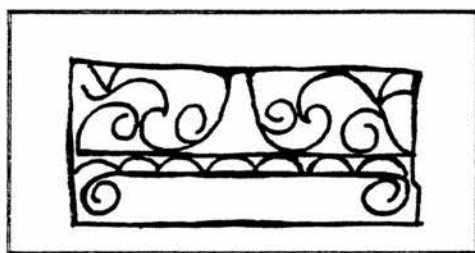
#### The Rectangle (figs. 5 and 6)

The Rectangle on the Benbecula stone (figs. 1a, 6.3) is long and narrow, divided along its length into two equal parts by an incised line and its left-hand interior rectangle is decorated with "two curved lines terminating in little scrolls",<sup>387</sup> springing from two corners on one long side of the Rectangle. Curved lines terminating in "little scrolls" spring from diagonally opposite corners in the Rectangle on a Class I stone from the farm of Newbigging Leslie in Aberdeenshire (fig. 6.1). The Newbigging Rectangle has no central dividing line like Benbecula. Decoration similar to that of the Newbigging Rectangle is found on a Rectangle in the Sloping Cave in Fife (fig. 6.2), where lines springing from diagonally opposite corners end in small circles rather than in "little scrolls". A Rectangle on a Class I stone at Cargill in Perthshire has curved lines ending in scrolls similar to those of the Benbecula Rectangle, springing from the corners on a short side of the Rectangle.<sup>388</sup> The Rectangle on a lost Class I stone from Sandness on the Shetland mainland was divided lengthwise into two unequal parts by a straight line whose centre bulged out, forming a penannular shape, thus creating a notch within the space of the larger internal rectangle (fig. 6.4). The Rectangle on a fragment of a slab found near the head of one of the two isolated cist burials at Ackergill in Caithness is divided into two equal parts by a central line (fig. 6.5).<sup>389</sup> One of the two inner rectangles is decorated by two curved lines, each springing from a point approximately one third from the ends of the central dividing line, which almost meet at the

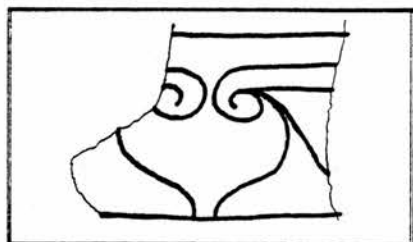
FIG. 5 RECTANGLE SYMBOLS



1. S. RONALDSAY (ECMS:17)



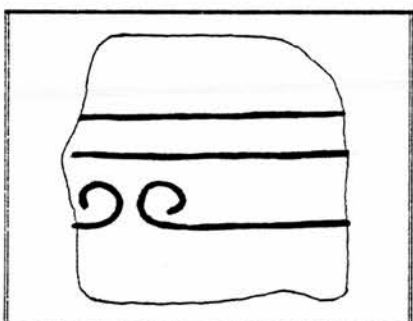
6. LINKS OF KEISS BAY. (ECMS: 25)



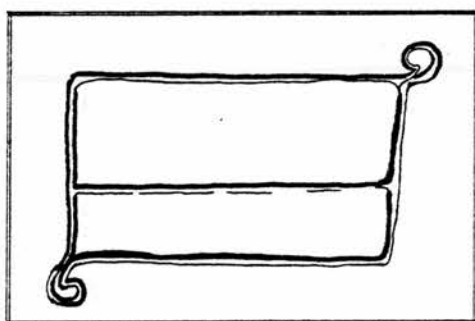
2. FIRTH. (ECMS: 16)



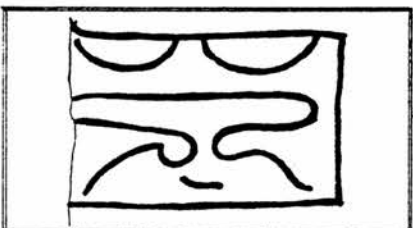
7. GOLSPIE. (ECMS: 48B)



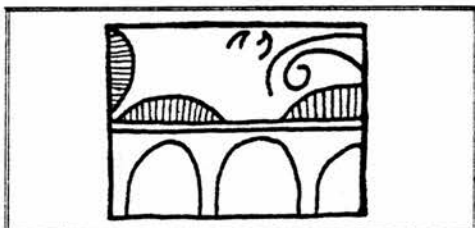
3. LITTLE FERRY LINKS.1 (ECMS:44)



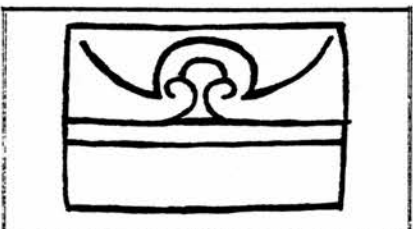
8. GRANTOWN. (ECMS: 131)



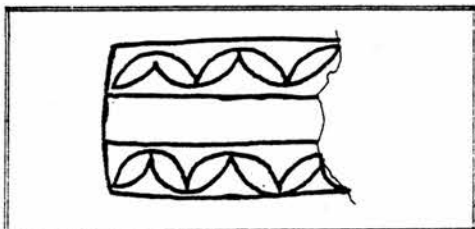
4. OLD DEER. (SSS:1 XL)



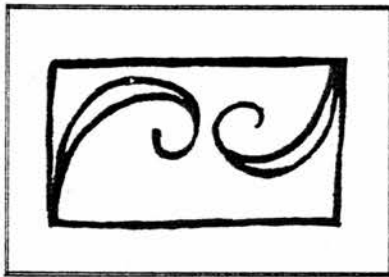
9. CLYNEKIRKTON. No2 (ECMS: 35)



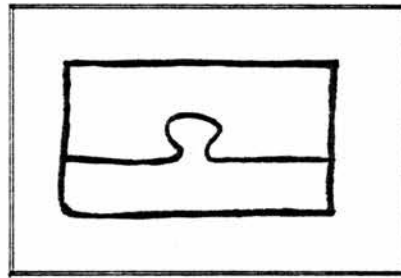
5. CLYNEKIRKTON. No1 (ECMS: 34)



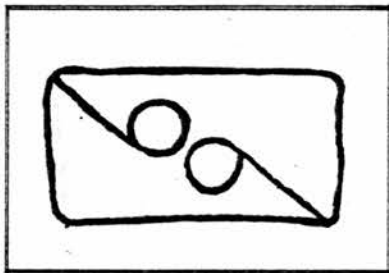
10. FERRYGREEN. (PSAS 95: XIII.2)



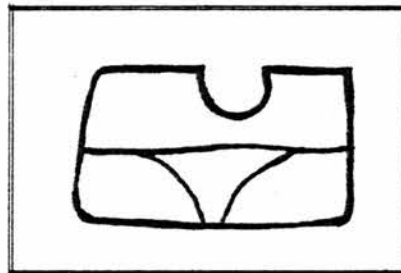
1. NEUBIGGING LESLIE. (ECMS:192).



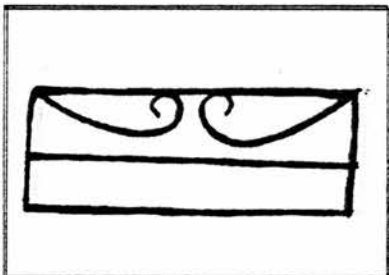
4. SANDNESS. (ECMS:2).



2. SLOPING CAVE. (355II: 30).



5. ACKERGIH. (PSAS:60 p179).



3. BENBECULA. (ECMS:114).

FIG. 6 LATE RECTANGLE SYMBOLS

centre point of the long outer edge of one side of the Rectangle. The Rectangle on a Class I stone at Grantown in Elginshire is ornamented with a central line and small spirals on diagonally opposite corners that extend beyond the limits of the Rectangle (fig. 5.8).<sup>390</sup> Similar spirals decorate all four corners of an incised Rectangle on a Class II slab at Golspie (fig. 5.7), whose contemporaneous ogham inscription is unlikely to be earlier than the mid-eighth century.<sup>391</sup> A small stone fragment found some three miles from Golspie, Little Ferry Links No. 1, shows two parallel lines set close together and a third set apart from the first two, interrupted at the centre to form two small scrolls (fig. 5.3), all "probably forming part of the rectangular symbol", according to Romilly Allen.<sup>392</sup> Somewhat similar decoration was applied to a Rectangle symbol on a stone at Old Deer, now lost (fig. 5.4), whose central line was parallel to one side of two lobate scrolls that served as terminals for forms analogous to those carved on Crescents of the "Spirals or Scrolls" group. The Rectangle on a Class I stone from Fairygreen, Collace, Perthshire, is divided into three internal sections by two parallel lines (fig. 5.10). The outer rectangles of the inner three thus formed feature "almond shapes" arranged in the manner of a debased vine scroll. Alan Small has pointed out that similar decoration may be found on the Stepped Rectangle with Curved Ends on the Class II Monymusk stone in Aberdeenshire.<sup>393</sup> Almond shapes also serve as ornamentation on the short end of the L-shaped Rectangle symbols of Strathmartine No. 3 and Woodway, Class II stones in Forfarshire.<sup>394</sup> The scroll decoration within the body of the Pictish Beast on the Fairygreen stone is abbreviated and probably late. All of the Rectangle symbols discussed thus far are probably late as well.

The Rectangle on a Class I stone from South Ronaldsay in Orkney (fig. 5.1) is paired with a Crescent and V-rod. The decoration of the



Crescent belongs to the prototypical "Peltas" group<sup>395</sup> and the ornament of the Rectangle is of the same type. A pair of incised lines springs from the centre of each short side of the Rectangle, terminating in small scrolls at the centre of the symbol, suggesting the ancestry of the simpler scroll decoration of the Little Ferry Links and Old Deer Rectangles. The Rectangle on a Class I stone from Firth in Orkney (fig. 5.2) features scrolls like those of the South Ronaldsay Rectangle but has lost the peltas of the original. The Rectangle on an ogham-inscribed stone found near the circular cairn at Ackergill in Caithness, but known as Links of Keiss Bay (fig. 5.6), is "divided longitudinally by a band of parallel lines"<sup>396</sup> and the upper half of the Rectangle contains pelta decoration. Two small scrolls descend from the ends of the central dividing lines into the otherwise undecorated lower half of the Rectangle, suggesting the precursor of the Grantown and Golspie Rectangles. The "contiguous curves" between the parallel lines at the centre of Links of Keiss Bay<sup>397</sup> have become separated and elongated, vaguely suggesting a classical egg-and-dart moulding without the darts, on Clynekirkton No. 2 in Sutherland (fig. 5.9), where they occupy the lower half of the Rectangle. The upper half of the Clynekirkton No. 2 Rectangle seems to have had scroll decoration. The three semicircles along the bottom edge of the Gaspie Rectangle (fig. 5.7) are probably related to the "contiguous curves" on Links of Keiss Bay and the "egg-and-dart" on Clynekirkton No. 2. Another Rectangle, on Clynekirkton No. 1 (fig. 5.5), now in Dunrobin Museum, has two central dividing lines. The decoration of its upper half appears to be a combination of "Dome and Wing" and scroll ornament. The Crescent and V-rod on the same stone (pl. 8, C1) is the closest to the prototype of the late "Dome and Wing" group.

The South Ronaldsay Rectangle should thus be the closest to the prototype, followed closely by Links of Keiss Bay. Oliver Padel is

generally reluctant to date any Pictish ogham before the eighth century, but found the vowels of the ogham inscription on the Links of Keiss Bay stone to be "more Irish in type than is common in Pictland", although recognisably Pictish, which tends to support an early date for Links of Keiss Bay.<sup>398</sup> The scroll decoration of Little Ferry Links and Old Deer descend from South Ronaldsay. The scrollwork of Grantown and Golspie descend from Links of Keiss Bay, as does the "egg-and-dart" of Golspie and Clynekirkton No. 2. The internal scrolls of Cargill, Newbigging Leslie, Sloping Cave, and Benbecula represent a still later group. The notched Rectangles of Sandness and Ackergill are later still.

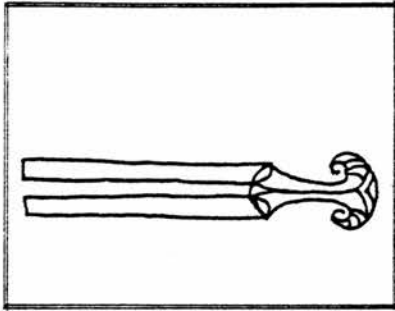
The typology of the Rectangle tends to mirror that of the Crescent. Pelta decoration is clearly depicted on South Ronaldsay and Links of Keiss Bay, less clearly on the Class II Golspie stone. The decoration of the Rectangles on Firth, Little Ferry Links, Old Deer and Clynekirkton No. 1 and No. 2 is apparently related to Crescents of the "Spirals or Scrolls" group. The "contiguous curves" or "egg-and-dart" of Links of Keiss Bay, Golspie, Clynekirkton No. 2, and, possibly, Old Deer, may reflect the decoration of Crescents of the "Dome and Wing" group.

Isabel Henderson has noted that the Rectangle and Circular Disc symbols are found only north of the Mounth, with the exception of the Fife caves.<sup>399</sup> The single example of both symbols found west of Druimalban occur on the same Class I stone from Strome Shunnamal in Benbecula. It is impossible to arrive at a reasonable typology of the Circular Disc symbol, but the Benbecula Rectangle is typologically late.

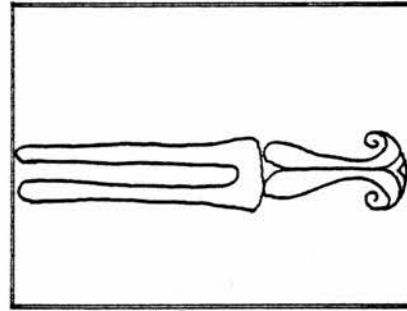
#### The "Tuning-Fork" (fig. 7)

The Raasay slab with Pictish symbols (fig. 1c) bears a Notched Rectangle with Curved End in addition to its late "Dome and Wing" decorated Crescent and V-rod. The former symbol will be referred to here,

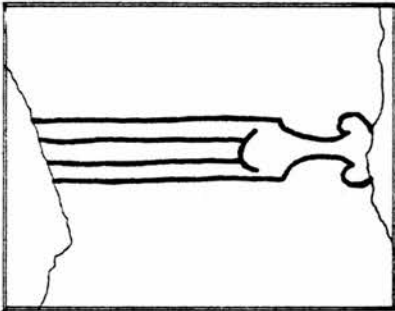
for the sake of brevity, by its customary nickname, the tuning-fork symbol. Romilly Allen lists seven Class I and one Class II examples.<sup>400</sup> Of the Class I examples, three are doubtful. The symbol on a stone at Roskeen in Easter Ross probably represents a pair of pincers of smith's tongs.<sup>401</sup> The strange symbol on a stone found at North Redhill farm in Banffshire, which seems to be a rectangle stood on end with a semi-circular notch cut out of the bottom and a small spiral at the upper right, is decorated within by a pelta Romilly Allen compared to the "handles" of tuning-fork symbols. The farm tenant who found the stone recut the symbols before Romilly Allen saw it, rendering the identity of the symbol doubtful.<sup>402</sup> The badly weathered symbol at the top of Craighton No. 1,<sup>403</sup> now at Dunrobin Castle, looks more like the plain Notched Rectangle symbol, with interior circular decoration like that of the Notched Rectangles on the Whitecleugh chain terminal and on a Class I slab fragment from Westfield farm in Fife.<sup>404</sup> Only the two "blades" of Kintradwell No. 4 survive,<sup>405</sup> as is the case with the unfinished tuning-fork of the Inchyra stone, which Stevenson has shown to be "deliberately defaced".<sup>406</sup> Discovered in 1945, the Inchyra stone is not included in Romilly Allen's list. The tuning-fork on Kintore No. 3 in Aberdeenshire had a greatly elongated "handle" that was already broken off at the top when it was purchased by the National Museum of Antiquities in 1865.<sup>407</sup> A drawing made before 1865 shows that the "handle" originally had a pelta-shaped terminal (fig. 7.2) like those on the Dunrobin Castle, Raasay and Abernethy No. 1 examples. The Dunrobin tuning-fork is the best-preserved of all such symbols (fig. 7.1). It has a somewhat elongated "handle" whose pelta-shaped terminal is decorated with incised lines. James Richardson's 1907 drawing of the Raasay symbol stone shows a pelta-shaped terminal on a shorter handle (fig. 7.3), but the stone has since been trimmed and the terminal lost.



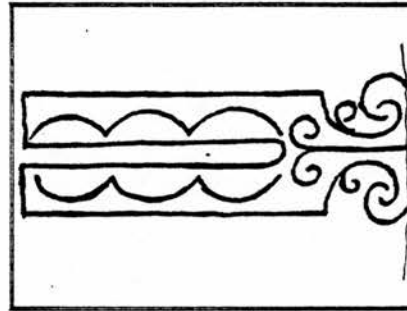
1. DUNROBIN. (ECMS: 39).



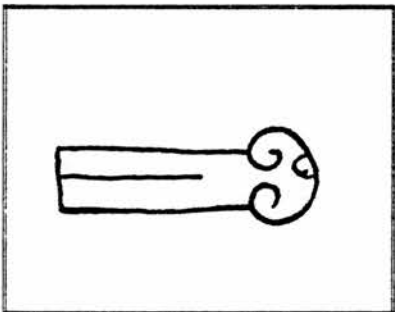
2. KINTORE. No. 3 (SSS: II. 16. 9).



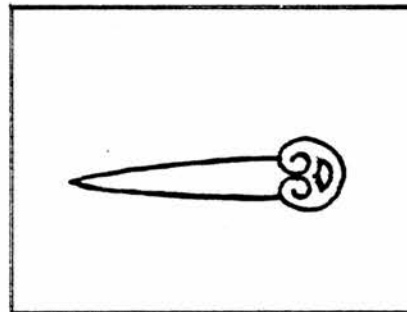
3. RAASAY. (PSAS 41. p. 436)



4. ABERNETHY. No. 1 (ECMS: 299).



5. ARDLAIR. (ECMS: 550).



6. ANWOTH. (ECMS: 508)

FIG. 7 "TUNING-FORK" SYMBOLS AND VARIANTS

The "blades" of Abernethy No. 1 (fig. 7.4) are decorated with contiguous curves. The Dunrobin tuning-fork probably represents the prototype of the symbol, with undecorated "blades", longish "handle" and a decorated terminal or pommel. The extraordinarily long "handle" of Kintore No. 3, the short "handles" of Raasay and Abernethy No. 1, and the ornamented "blades" of Abernethy No. 1 may indicate typological lateness, if conclusions can be reached with so few examples.

Professor Thomas would include two variants of another symbol, not distinguished by Romilly Allen, in the same category with the tuning-fork symbol.<sup>408</sup> Of these, the example provided by a Class I stone found at Ardlair farm, near Kennethmont in Aberdeenshire, comes closest to the tuning-fork symbol: a rectangle divided by a central line, topped by a semi-circle ending in two small scrolls (fig. 7.5). The Ardlair symbol appears to be another version of a symbol at Anwoth, whose Double Disc and Z-rod is discussed above. Its terminal is similar to that of the Ardlair symbol but its other end is pointed with no central line (fig. 7.6). Raleigh Radford would prefer to identify the Anwoth symbol as a whetstone with "elaborately scrolled terminals",<sup>409</sup> which seems a likely explanation.

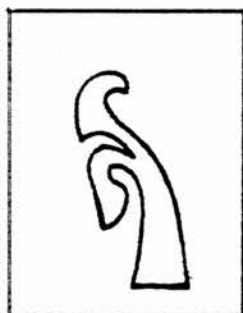
The decoration of the Raasay symbol stone's Crescent is of the late "Dome and Wing" type (pl. 8, C2). Its tuning-fork symbol is likely to be late as well. It also displays a Chi-Rho cross whose features will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

### The Flower Symbol

The Flower symbol is incised on the Pabbay stone (fig. 1b). Professor Thomas has compared the Flower symbol to first-century bronze British chariot harness mounts, which were influenced by Roman dolphin-shaped mounts, but the correspondences are inexact.<sup>410</sup> Five of the

six Class I Flowers face right. Three of the four Class II Flowers face left. Four of the Class I Flowers have no internal decoration: Craigton No. 1 in Sutherland (fig. 8.1), the Flower in the Doo Cave in Fife (fig. 8.2), and Banchory House No. 5 (fig. 8.3) and Park House (fig. 8.7) in Aberdeenshire. Romilly Allen identified the weathered Park House Flower as a Notched Rectangle and Z-rod but James Ritchie later showed that it is, in fact, a Flower symbol with a rectangular notch at the bottom.<sup>411</sup> Only one other Flower has such a notch, the incised symbol on the Class II Golspie stone (fig. 8.10). Dunnichen (fig. 8.8) and Pabbay (fig. 8.9) alone of Class I examples have interior decoration, the Dunnichen Flower having a very fine spiral scroll and Pabbay a triangular form with a curved base. The Pabbay, Craigton No. 1, Dunnichen, and Doo Cave Flowers, and, possibly, Banchory No. 5, have two stalks. Park House is damaged and it is impossible to tell how many stalks it had. Golspie and the Class II Gask stone (fig. 8.4) also have Flowers with two stalks. Glamis No. 1, another Class II example, has a single stalk, the whole described by a double outline (fig. 8.6). The only other Class II Flower, at Ulbster in Caithness (fig. 8.5), is severely weathered but appears to have three stalks. Golspie is the only Class II example with discernible interior decoration, consisting of lateral incised lines and a triangle. The interior triangles of the Pabbay and Ulbster Flowers may descend from a prototypical spiral-decorated original, to which Dunnichen would be the closest, but the Dunnichen Double Disc bears late spiral ornament, so its Flower symbol may be typologically late as well, in which case the undecorated Class I Craigton No. 1 Flower would be the closest to the prototype. There is not enough evidence to permit certainty, however, and no relative chronology can be applied to the Pabbay stone on the basis of its Flower symbol, although its "Dome and Wing" Crescent is typologically late.





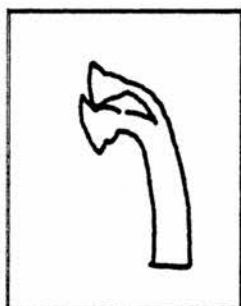
1. CRAIGHTON No. 1 (ECMS:30).



2. DOO CAVE. (SSS II:34).



3. BANCHORY HOUSE No. 5. (PSAS 49:37).



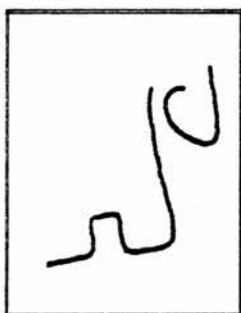
4. GASK. (ECMS:307a).



5. ULBSTER. (ECMS:31).



6. GLAMIS No. 1. (SSS II: A:114).



7. PARK HOUSE. (PSAS 49:40).



8. DUNNICHEN. (ECMS:223).



9. PABBAY. (ECMS:116).



10. GOLSPIE. (ECMS:48B).

FIG. 8 FLOWER SYMBOLS

## Fish

Two of the three Class I Pictish animals symbols found west of Druimalban occur on the same stone, found at Gairloch in Wester Ross (pl. 6), a fish and a bird identified by Dr. Stevenson as an eagle.<sup>412</sup> The line of the fish's gill is clearly marked. It has a central line down its body, pectoral, ventral, and anal fins on its underside, and on the back a dorsal fin in the middle and an adipose fin near the tail. C. A. Gordon identifies fish with adipose fins as members of the genus Salmonidae, whose other two members, trout and grayling, "are of comparative insignificance".<sup>413</sup> Given the strength, courage and tenacity which human perception traditionally ascribes to the character of other Class I animals such as bulls, boars, wolves, and eagles, the identification of the Class I Fish symbol as a salmon is likely to be correct.

There are sixteen Class I Fish symbols, including cave art, and four in Class II. Of the Class I examples, Stonehaven No. 1, presumed lost by Romilly Allen but now Banchory House No. 2<sup>414</sup> is rudely done but has the adipose fin. The top of the Links of Keiss Bay stone is damaged and only the underside of the Fish is left, although the lower three fins survive.<sup>415</sup> Only the tail remains on the broken Drumbuie No. 2. Cross-hatching appears to be indicated above the tail, obscuring the adipose fin.<sup>416</sup> Only two fins can be seen on the underside of the fragmentary Percylieu Fish.<sup>417</sup> The requisite dorsal and adipose fins are depicted atop the salmon on the incised Class I side of Glamis No. 2, and the pectoral, ventral and anal fins below.<sup>418</sup> The correct number of fins is also found on the Fish of Easterton of Roseisle in Elginshire and Keith Hall and Kintore No. 1 in Aberdeenshire.<sup>419</sup> The Inchyra Fish appears to have had all of its fins.<sup>420</sup> The Edderton Fish has a dorsal fin but no adipose fin. Its pectoral and anal fins are visible but the space that would have been occupied by the ventral fin is obscured by a

typologically late Double Disc and Z-rod.<sup>421</sup> The ventral fin of the Class I Gölspie Fish, which has all its other fins is similarly obscured by a Flower symbol.<sup>422</sup> The Class II St. Vigean No. 1 fish has the three lower and adipose fins but lacks the dorsal in order to accommodate the figure of the eagle attacking the fish.<sup>423</sup> The incised Class II Ulbster Fish has the dorsal and adipose fins, but only the two lower ones.<sup>424</sup> Rhynie No. 1 lacks the adipose fin, as does the Dunrobin Fish, but Gordon has argued that the missing Dunrobin fin is a "mistake caused by the artist's having carried on the line of the back behind the dorsal fin at one operation, after which the addition of the adipose fin would have been a botch".<sup>425</sup> A central line along the body of the Fish, like that on the Gairloch stone, is found at Keith Hall, Kintore No. 1, Rhynie No. 1, Glamis No. 2, Easterton of Roseisle, the Inchyra stone, and on both the Covesea Cave and Jonathan's Cave Fish.<sup>426</sup> In Class II, the central line is omitted from St. Vigean No. 1, but does occur on the Gölspie Fish and the two Class II Caithness examples, Ulbster and Latheron.<sup>427</sup> Latheron and St. Vigean No. 1 are the only examples carved in relief and both are inscribed. Gölspie is also inscribed and Jackson would not date the ogham inscriptions of the Gölspie and Latheron stones before the mid-eighth century, nor the Latin letters of the St. Vigean inscription before the ninth century.<sup>428</sup> Padel dates the Latheron inscription perhaps as early as the first half of the eighth century.<sup>429</sup>

The Fish is also found on an outlier at Borthwick Mains in Roxburghshire, with all five fins but no central line. R. W. Feachem and Charles Thomas accept it as Pictish.<sup>430</sup> The Borthwick Mains Fish, with its fins reduced to curved hatchings, is much more crudely done than those in Pictland proper, even more so than Banchory House No. 1, and Gordon has rightly remarked that "though there is no reason why the

artist's intention should have been different from that of the Pictish artists, he was not trained in their school, and indeed cannot be claimed as a trained artist at all".<sup>431</sup> Even on the relatively crude Banchory House No. 1, the fins are all shown in incised outline. The Borthwick Mains Fish may be late and debased. Raleigh Radford dates it to the period following Dunnichen.<sup>432</sup>

Other than the odd missing adipose fin or central line, Pictish Fish symbols deviate little from the established model. All that can be said of the Gairloch Fish, compared to its brethren, is that it is a salmon with all its parts intact.

### Bird Symbols (fig. 9)

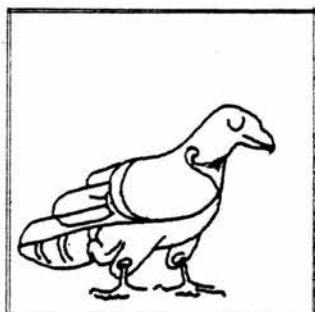
The Gairloch stone (pl. 6) is broken and its bird symbol damaged. Professor Thomas has distinguished two kinds of Bird symbols on Pictish stones. One is an eagle and the other is a goose, a distinction not made by Romilly Allen, who merely listed a Bird symbol.<sup>433</sup> The best Goose appears on a Class I stone from Easterton of Roseisle (fig. 9.9), whose Fish symbol is described above. Its neck is turned around and bent over its body and the head rests on the back. The webbing of its feet is plainly indicated. The wing, tail feathers and body are differentiated and the tail and wing end in a point. The only other clear example of a Goose symbol on a Class I stone is at Peterhead farm, near Gleneagles in Perthshire (fig. 9.10). Its head, too, is bent over the body and the wing and body are also differentiated, but the tail is blunt rather than pointed. Tillytarmont No. 1 is problematic (fig. 9.11). Its neck is somewhat elongated and its beak curves downwards, suggesting a bird of prey, although it is not hooked enough for that. Charles Calder would identify the Tillytarmont bird as a duck.<sup>434</sup> Long-necked birds like geese or swans appear on the walls of the Doo Cave in Fife and one

in Jonathan's Cave has its head turned around over its body, although its neck does not lie along the back.<sup>435</sup>

The Goose was associated with the Roman war god Mars and is shown with Mars on a Roman shield boss from Kirkham in Lancashire and on an early third-century gold and silver-decorated bronze Anglian disc from Thorsberg in Schleswig, although the latter probably depicts Mars Thingsus, the Germanic god Tyr or Tiw.<sup>436</sup> The Pictish Geese at Easterton of Roseisle and Peterhead can, however, claim Celtic associations. The Gaulish sanctuary at Roquepertuse, destroyed in the Roman conquest of Provence in 124 B.C., was apparently dedicated to a war god, Mars Taranis, and seems to have had the figure of a goose over its portico.<sup>437</sup> The association of Latin, Germanic and Celtic war gods with geese suggests a common Indo-European origin but we cannot be certain that Pictish Geese symbols had either the same origin or the same purpose.

The finest example of a Class I Eagle symbol is from Knowe of Burrian, Birsay, Orkney (fig. 9.1), a stone whose Crescent belongs to the typologically early "Pelta" series (pl. 8, A6). Dr. Henderson's description of the Knowe of Burrian Eagle deserves to be repeated in full: "an unbroken line runs from the bird's tail, describes the edge of the great feathers of the wing, the curve of the wing on the shoulder, and, returning from the tight hook or spiral at the neck, defines the breast and foreleg". The shoulder of the Eagle symbol of St. John on fol. 1 of the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 197B features virtually the same scroll, but its tail is not distinguished from the wing. Instead, "the tail becomes all wing feathers".<sup>438</sup> The body of the Knowe of Burrian Eagle is further distinguished from the wing by means of parallel, vertically-arranged, curved lines, receding from the juncture of neck and body. Similar parallel curved lines are found on the bodies of Class I Eagles at Gairloch (fig. 9.2), Strathpeffer in

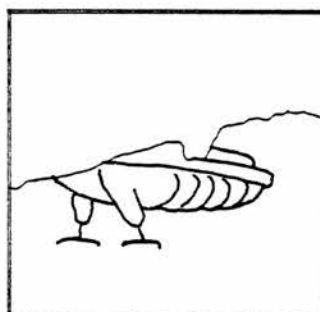
FIG. 9 EAGLES AND GEESSE



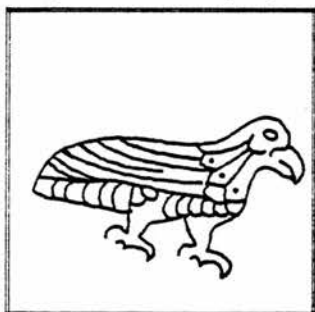
1. KNOWE of BURRIAN.  
(HENDERSON 1967, p.137)



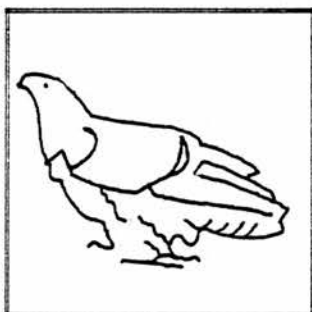
1A. WALTON.  
(ECMS:358)



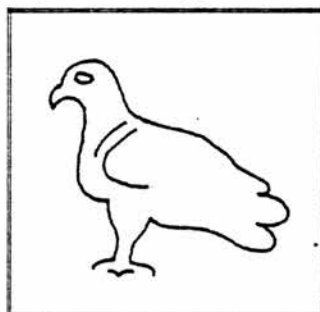
2. GAIRLOCH.  
(PSAS:86.XXI),(ARCH.J.120p.71.)



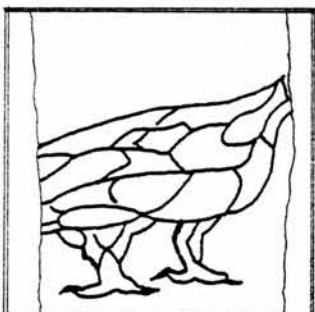
3. STRATHPEFFER.  
(ECMS:57)



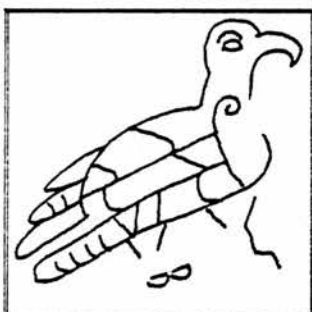
4. TYRJE.  
(ECMS:204.)



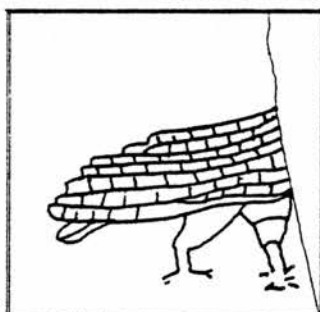
5. BIRNIE. No.1.  
(ECMS:122).



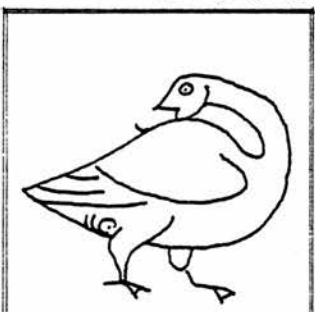
6. FYVIE.  
(ECMS:175).



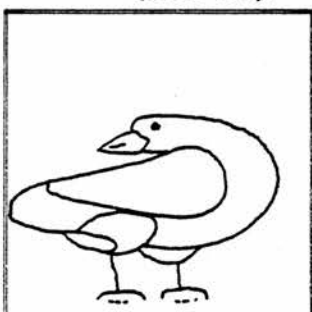
7. INVERAVON. No.1  
(ECMS:158).



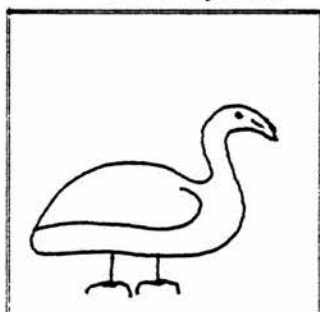
8. BROUGH of BIRSAV.  
(PSAS:74,XXIb)



9. EASTERON of ROSEISLE.  
(ECMS:130A)



10. PETERHEAD. GIENEAGLES  
(PSAS:81 p3)



11. TILLYTARMONT. No.1.  
(PSAS:88.XII.3)(PSAS:81.p4).

Note: a stone discovered in 1972, Tillytarmont No. 5, shows an Eagle above a Pictish Beast. The Eagle is close to the Brough of Burrian prototype. See Discovery and Excavation (1972), 1.



Easter Ross (fig. 9.3), Inveravon No. 1 in Banffshire (fig. 9.7), and Tyrie in Aberdeenshire (fig. 9.4), whose shoulder, though worn, appears to have been separated from the rest of the wing, perhaps by scrolls. The Eagle at Birnie in Elginshire (fig. 9.5) survives in outline and is unique in having its legs placed together so that only one leg is shown in profile, but its outline shows that the tail and wing were clearly differentiated. The broken Fyvie No. 2 in Aberdeenshire (fig. 9.6) has lost its head and tail. The remaining breast, shoulder and body are ornamented with a network of rather meaningless lines that barely serve to distinguish shoulder from breast. Inveravon No. 1 is late and rather primitive. The curved line terminating in a scroll at the back of the neck should describe the shoulder of the wing, but it is reversed, negating its function. The famous Brough of Birsay part-relief slab with three warriors in procession features the remains of the latest Class I Eagle (fig. 9.8). The slab is fragmentary and the Eagle is missing its head, breast and the top of its shoulder. The underside of the body and the wing are not differentiated at all but are decorated with incised lines whose pattern is like that of well-laid bricks. The tail is indicated by two small feathers that emerge from underneath the brickwork.

The heads of the Eagles from Knowe of Burrian and in <sup>Corpus Christi,</sup> Cambridge MS 197B are flat, as is the head of an incised Eagle on a broken slab from Walton in Fife (fig. 9.1a). All other surviving Class I Eagle heads, at Strathpeffer, Birnie, Inveravon No. 1, and Tyrie, are round, a feature whose ancestry C. A. Gordon and Charles Thomas would ultimately derive from the art of the steppe culture.<sup>439</sup> Gordon suggests that the flatter skull of the Walton Eagle depends upon Roman military insignia,<sup>440</sup> but it is more likely to depend upon direct observation. In 1963, Thomas suggested that the Pictish Eagle symbol might represent

the erne or Sea Eagle, which had been extinct in Scotland since 1911. John A. Love, the naturalist since responsible for reintroducing the Sea Eagle to the British Isles, has recently identified the Knowe of Burrian Eagle as a Sea Eagle, which also has a flat skull.<sup>441</sup>

Professor Thomas has dismissed Stevenson's original identification of the Gairloch bird as an Eagle and holds that it is "almost certainly a Goose, not an Eagle".<sup>442</sup> The body and wings of the best Pictish Goose, Easterton of Roseisle, meet at the tail in a point. The Gairloch bird does not have a pointed tail. It has talons instead of the webbed feet of the Easterton of Roseisle Goose. The Gairloch bird is an Eagle whose remaining features show that it is close to the Knowe of Burrian prototype: separation of wing, tail and body, curved lines on the underside of the body. Thomas is quite right, however, to call attention to the fact that two types of birds serve as symbols on Class I Pictish stones, the Eagle and the Goose.<sup>443</sup>

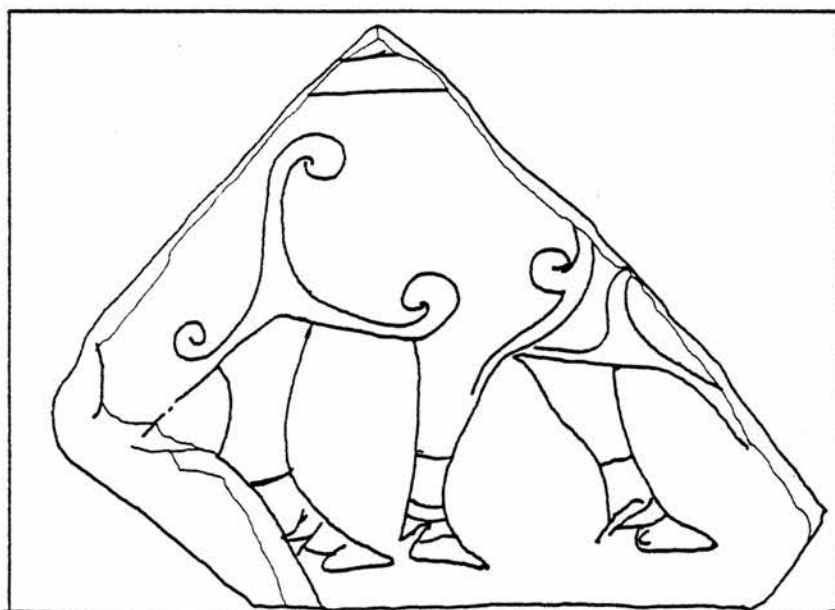
Two Class II stones feature Eagles whose talons firmly clutch the back of fish, Latheron in Caithness and St. Vigean's No. 1.<sup>444</sup> The St. Vigean's Eagle bites its fish just behind the head. The Latheron Eagle has as yet caught its fish with only one claw, but its head inclines slightly towards the fish, suggesting that the meal will shortly commence. The Easterton of Roseisle Goose and the Gairloch Eagle are each associated with Fish symbols, but space intervenes between fish and bird on both stones.

### Boars (fig. 10)

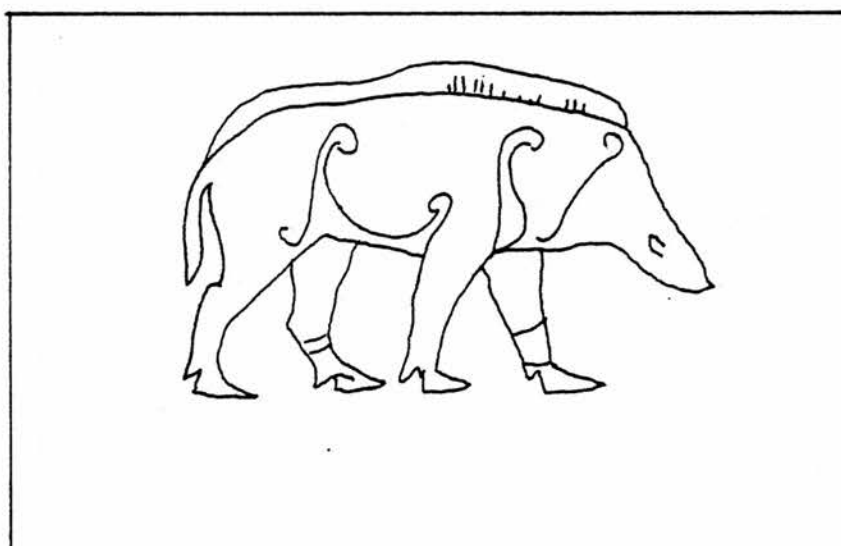
One other Pictish animal stone is found west of Druimalban, the Dunadd Boar (pl. 7). There are only two other Class I Boars, both in Inverness-shire, Knocknagael and Clune Farm, near Dores. The Knocknagael Boar (fig. 10b) is shown with its far legs striding forward and its

near legs behind. The line of its back and crest are painstakingly incised on a very rough surface and vertical lines indicate the fur of the crest. The line of its mouth and tusk are less deeply incised. Romilly Allen's drawing shows an ear falling forward in front of the crest, but Gordon has found that this is a mistake, due to the "prolongation of a natural fissure in the stone and a chance diagonal flaking", whereas "in nature the ears lie flat on the head and are not seen in profile".<sup>445</sup> Nonetheless, the ear of the Knocknagael Boar may be indicated by the spiral near the intersection of the crest and the top of the head. Elegant scrolls define both the front and the back of the near foreleg joint. The scroll behind the foreleg is continued in a curving line that economically alludes to the outward bulge of the rib cage, becoming in turn a scroll that describes the rear haunch and the narrow hips. The Dores slab is broken and the Boar (fig. 10a) has lost its head and tail, but the line of its neck survives, suggesting that its head leaned lower than that of the Knocknagael example. The scrolls on the body of the Dores Boar function in the same way as those of Knocknagael. Its remaining three hooves are set off from the lower leg by incised lines, leaving them long and pointed in front, like the hooves of the Knocknagael Boar.

The near hind leg of the Dunadd Boar (pl. 7) is shown moving forward, with its near foreleg behind. Incised lines survive on three of its hooves, setting them off from the lower legs in the manner of the Dores example. At a meeting of the Prehistoric Society held in Argyll in 1973, Professor Alcock expressed doubts about the Pictish identity of the Dunadd Boar, particularly because it "lacks the characteristic joint spirals".<sup>446</sup> The line of the Boar's back has been obliterated by the elements and only the leg, snout, part of the tail, and the underside of the animal are still visible. A barely discernible line still



(a) DORES. (ECMB:100)



(b) KNOCKNAGAEH. (ECMS:108), (PSAS:98.XXIX).

FIG. 10

CLASSI BOARS.

defines the corner of the jaw, then turns to run parallel to the throat until it intersects with the line of the front of the near foreleg. Other incised lines describe the back of the near foreleg joint where it joins the body and the front of the near hind leg joint. Another line parallels the curve of the rear haunch, then runs parallel to the line of the belly between the near legs and turns to parallel the line defining the near foreleg joint. The double incised lines thus formed in front of the rear haunch and behind the near foreleg have all the appearance of Pictish animal scrolls that have lost their bulbous terminals to wind and weather, just as the line at the corner of the jaw seems to have lost its end spiral. The sculptors of the Knocknagael and Dores Boars placed the near hind leg behind, allowing for a scroll on the body above the front of the rear joint, whose forward extension runs along the line of the belly, ending in a lobate terminal behind the front near leg, and continues behind into the forward part of the rear haunch, details that suggest the bulk of the chest, the narrowing at the waist and the strength of the hindquarters. The scrolls of the Dunadd Boar depart from the more successful formula seen in the other two examples, flattening the appearance of the animal. The lines that run parallel to the line of the Dunadd Boar's throat and belly are merely decorative and do nothing to describe its mass. It is therefore most probably a later example than the Dores and Knocknagael Boars, although its hooves are correctly drawn.

Cecil Curle first explained the presences of a Pictish Boar at Dunadd as "the work of a raiding party of victorious Picts" and she and Francoise Henry subsequently suggested that it was carved when Oengus son of Fergus captured Dunadd in 736.<sup>447</sup> The eighth-century date and the Pictish origin of the Boar are accepted by Charles Thomas and Ralegh Radford.<sup>448</sup> Alcock, who seems to accept the Pictish identity

of the Dunadd Boar in recent papers, still has reservations, however, because "this expression of Pictish defiance was not obliterated", and his doubts have been echoed by Graham and Anna Ritchie.<sup>449</sup> But the Cenél Loairn apparently abandoned Dunadd some time after 736 and Professor Jackson cautions us that "we must not necessarily attribute our impulses to the Scots of Argyll in the eighth century".<sup>450</sup> Gordon calls attention to the Boar's "downcast appearance" and suggests that it represents the "hero's portion after the capture of the citadel".<sup>451</sup> The eighth-century date is supported by the typological lateness of the Boar.

The Dunadd Boar is accompanied by an ogham inscription that appears to contain no more than one possible vowel. Jackson calls it "gibberish as it stands" and thus "typical of the enigmatic Ogams of Pictland".<sup>452</sup> Oliver Padel finds it "uniquely quite unpronounceable" but very Irish in appearance and possibly as early as the seventh century, although an eighth-century date is not impossible. Padel accepts it as Pictish but also suggests that its Irish appearance could be due to Pictish invaders having to find an Irish oghamist to carve the inscription.<sup>453</sup>

The Dunadd Boar is typologically late but neither it nor the inscription need be as late as the Pictish conquest of 736. There was considerable unrest in Pictland in the first third of the eighth century. "A slaughter of the Picts" by Saxons, presumably of Northumbria, in Campo Manorn, near the headwaters of the Forth, is recorded in 711.<sup>454</sup> In 713, Ciniod, brother of king Nechtan son of Derile, was killed and Nechtan captured Tolarg son of Drostan.<sup>455</sup> Nechtan retired to a monastery in 724 but re-emerged to take part in a power struggle with Drust, Eilpin and Oengus son of Fergus that gave Oengus the victory in 729.<sup>456</sup> It might well have behoved Pictish warriors to serve as mercenaries in Dál Riata during the same period. It was not unknown for



Picts to serve as mercenaries outside Pictland. The army of Mynyddog the Wealthy of the Gododdin, defeated at Catraeth c. 600, included at least one Pictish hero.<sup>457</sup> In the Old Irish Togail Bruidne Da Derga ("Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel"), the character Fer Rogain identifies three warriors in the service of the Irish high king as members of the Pictish tribe (Cruithentuath) who were not natives of Ireland but had left their own land.<sup>458</sup> If the Pictish Boar and ogham inscription at Dunadd mark the adherence of a band of Pictish mercenaries to a leader of the Cenél Loairn, or serve as a memorial to a Pict who fell in the service of Dál Riata, there would have been no need to deface them.<sup>459</sup> A date between c. 700 and 736 is suggested for the Dunadd Boar.

### Conclusions

The eight Pictish symbol stones in the West Highlands and Islands feature the representations of three Pictish animals, the Eagle, the Fish and the Boar; and eight or nine symbols: the Crescent and V-rod, the Double Disc and Z-rod, the Mirror and Comb, the Rectangle, the Flower, the tuning-fork symbol, and two different types of Circular Discs. The Fish on the Gairloch stone is a good example of its type and the Eagle on the same stone may be typologically early, suggesting a date in the first half of the seventh century. The Mirror and Comb on Clach Ard are barely recognizable, but its Crescent and V-rod and Double Disc and Z-rod are typologically late, as are the same two symbols on the Fiskavaig stone. The Crescent and V-rod symbols at Tobar na Maor, Raasay and Pabbay are also late and the Raasay tuning-fork symbol and Pabbay Flower may be late as well, although it is impossible to say if the same is true of the concentric circles on Tobar na Maor. The typology of the Circular Disc, as depicted at Benbecula, cannot be determined, but the Rectangle on the same stone is

a late example. With the exception of Gairloch, the Pictish symbol stones west of Druimalban are typologically late. We know from Adomnán that Dál Riata had gained control of the Pictish province in the west by the end of the seventh century. It is therefore highly unlikely that the symbol stones at Fiskavaig, Tobar na Maor, Clach Ard, Raasay, Benbecula, or Pabbay were carved any later than, say, the first quarter of the eighth century, when they might have been set up as a final act of Pictish defiance against their new Gaelic-speaking rulers. Most of them probably date to the late seventh century. Stevenson's argument that the earliest Crescent symbols may have come into use in the mid-seventh century and the majority of the symbols and animals not until c. 700 is contradicted by the Hebridean and West Highland evidence. The lack of Class II Pictish cross-slabs in the west and the typological lateness of symbol stones west of Druimalban argues for an earlier origin of the symbol series in stone and supports the stylistic date of c. 600 advocated above.<sup>460</sup> Henderson's case for the origin of the symbols among the northern Picts, in the area of the Moray Firth, extending perhaps as far as Orkney, is supported by the typologies of the Boar, whose best remaining prototypical example is in Inverness-shire, and those of the Eagle and Rectangle, whose best extant prototypes are in Orkney. The prototypical tuning-fork and Flower may both be in Sutherland, although the evidence is inconclusive. The same cannot be said, however, of the Double Disc and Z-rod. The disparate nature of the evidence for the typology of the Double Disc and Z-rod tends to support Stevenson's contention that different symbols may have been invented at different times, suggesting, if only in the case of the Double Disc and Z-rod, that it originated in a different area as well.

The typology of the Double Disc symbol and the difficulty of determining if concentric circles constituted a symbol different from

the Circular Disc suggest that the ancestry of the concentric circles and Double Disc symbols may have been considerably older than the La Tène period, whatever their later purpose may have been among the Picts. Professor Thomas, who sees the outline of Romilly Allen's Circular Disc symbol as a representation of a "solar disc", relates both the Double Disc and the Circular Disc and Rectangle, or "Mirror Case" symbol, to "the oculi motif, one of the very few apparently carried over from the (Boyne) art of the British northern and western megalithic tomb province into the 'cup-and-ring' style".<sup>461</sup> The concentric circles and Double Disc symbols may therefore have had their origins early in the Bronze Age or perhaps even earlier, although we cannot assume that the Pictish symbols had the same meaning as any possible Bronze Age precursors. The mere handful of examples of the concentric circles symbol implies that it may have lost its original force, as well as its original meaning, by the historic period. The typology of the Double Disc symbol does not negate Dr. Henderson's work on the origin centre of Pictish symbols: the Double Disc was an ancient sign, continually re-adapted to an evolving purpose, ready to hand when the Picts devised their own symbolic system.

### Historical Implications

The correspondence between the Gairloch Eagle and the prototypical Knowe of Burrian Eagle symbol in Orkney, in addition to the similarities between the houses at the Udal and Buckquoy, underscore the maritime connection between the Northern Isles and the West Highlands and Islands, as well as the relationship between the Hebrides and Orkney noted in the Irish Book of Invasions, but the typological lateness of the other symbol stones in the west needs to be explained. Early symbol stones are found in Orkney, but the protection afforded Christian missionaries

in Orkney by Bruide son of Maelchú in the late sixth century was apparently not extended by his successors to the Hebrides, where Donnán of Eigg was martyred in 617, suggesting that the Pictish kings' writ did not extend to the west as well as it did to the north. The need to stabilize the situation west of Druimalban, due, perhaps, to ineffective central Pictish control of the west, may have led to intermarriage between leading families of the western Picts and the Dál Riata of Argyll, if Marjorie Anderson's suggestion is correct, that Domnall Brecc, who fell at Strathcarron in 642, was the grandfather of Cano son of Gartnait. Dalriadic expansion to the north may have prompted the expedition to Ireland of the sons of Gartnait with the people of Skye in 668. It is tentatively suggested above that the destruction of the Hebrides in 672 might mark an attempt by a Pictish king east of Druimalban to assert his authority over his western province before the disastrous Pictish defeat by Northumbria in the same year. Weak central control and an unstable situation in the face of Dalriadic encroachment could explain the lack of typologically early symbol stones, other than Gairloch. The consolidation of power by Bruide son of Bili, in the years immediately preceding Dunnichen, would then provide the best context for the introduction of Class I symbol stones in Skye and the Outer Isles, rendered all the more precious when Bruide abandoned his western territory to Dál Riata after Dunnichen.

The typological lateness of the symbol stones in Skye, Raasay and the Outer Isles is not a case of too little, too late, however, and should not be seen to indicate the establishment of late Pictish hegemony in the west on the eve of the Dalriadic takeover. The similarities between the North Uist and Tiree zoomorphic swivel-rings, the escutcheon hook of the Eilean Tioram hanging-bowl, the Craig Phadrig mould, and the boars' heads at the bottom of the large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl

escutcheons; as well as the stylistic links between enamelled British hanging-bowl escutcheons, such as those from Sutton Hoo, and Pictish enamel work seen on the Gaulcross and Norrie's Law hand-pins, all suggest that the Picts west of Druimalban had access to artistic developments in the Pictish "heartland" in the sixth and early seventh centuries. Thereafter, the western Picts were subject to Dalriadic infiltration. Adomnán's accounts of Columba's sojourns in Skye suggest that Dál Riata had already begun to look to the north before the end of the sixth century. The Picts who destroyed Donnán's monastery in Eigg were probably pagans but the western Picts were apparently Christian by the time Maelrubai founded Applecross in the early 670s. The Chi-Rho decorated Raasay symbol stone might well have been carved during the lifetimes of both Cano son of Gartnait and Maelrubai. The story of the kindred of Cano and the mayhem that affected Skye in the late seventh and early eighth century may be seen as foreshadowing later phases of West Highland history: the existing power was overthrown, creating a vacuum that a few symbol stones were not enough to fill. However anxious Dál Riata may have been to gain control over the western Pictish province, Skye and Raasay do not seem to have enjoyed much political or ecclesiastical importance when the Vikings arrived at the end of the eighth century. The only sculptures of any great artistic merit produced in the former Pictish territory west of Druimalban between c. 800 and the tenth century were all carved, as we shall see, under revived Pictish influence.

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- the early seventh century and may have been the paternal grandfather of Bruide son of Bili, the victor of Dunnichen. See also Anderson, M., 1980, 170-2; ESSH, I, 193.
136. ESSH, I, 122, 145.
  137. Anderson, M., 1980, 93n.
  138. ESSH, I, 122; Bannerman 1974, 94n. It is surprising that Kirby 1976, 306-8, identifies Uerb as male, despite his acceptance of Pictish matrilinear succession.
  139. Anderson, M., 1980, 248, 262, 272, 280.
  140. Smyth 1984, 70.
  141. Adomnán 1961, 226.
  142. Discussed in Bannerman 1974, 84-5.
  143. Sellar 1985, 35-41; Dio Cassius, who introduces us to the Miathi or Maeatae, places them north of the "wall which cuts the island in half", and the Caledonians, whom he treats as culturally indistinguishable from the Maeatae, to the north of them. He remarks that they "possess their women in common" and tells us that the wife of the Caledonian chieftain Argentocoxos informed the empress Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, that Caledonian women "fulfill the demands of nature in a much better way than do you Roman women; for we consort openly with the best of men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest"; implying considerable freedom among pagan Pictish aristocratic women, if not matrilinear succession. See Dio's Roman History, trans. Earnest Cary, Loeb Edition, London and New York, IX, 1927, 263-5, 275.
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155. Ibid., 7.
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159. Ó Baoill 1976, 268. I am grateful to Dr. Sorley Maclean for additional discussion on this point.
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 Galbraith, J. J., "The Chi-Rho Crosses on Raasay: Their Importance and Chronological Relationships", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 67, 1932-3, 318-20, fig. 1, p. 63.
  336. Stevenson 1955, 104, fig. 15.
  337. Henderson 1958, 50.
  338. The different typology given to the V-rod by Charles Thomas in 1964 depended upon his belief that bone carvings and cave art preceded Class I stones: Thomas 1964, 52, fig. 4.16. The Crescent on Thomas's prototype of the V-rod, a carved ox bone from the Broch of Burrian, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, is an example of Stevenson's "Scrolls or Spirals" group and thus typologically later than the "Peltas" group.



339. Illustrated in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 65, 1930-1, 11, fig. 1.
340. Diack, Francis, "The Old-Celtic Inscribed and Sculptured Stones at Auqhollie, Kincardineshire, and Ogam in Scotland", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 59, 1924-5, 262. Padel 1972, 53, saw "nothing definite or even suggestive" of a symbol on the Auqhollie stone.
341. ECMS III, fig. 389.
342. Thomas 1964, fig. 3.8.
343. Henderson 1979, 24; Thomas 1964, 51, fig. 4.
344. Ritchie, James, "Notes on Some Aberdeenshire Sculptured Stones and Crosses", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 49, 1914-5, 35, fig. 2. Romilly Allen discovered on visiting Stonehaven that the six stones from Dimmacair had already been removed to Banchory House. Banchory House No. 2 is Romilly Allen's Stonehaven No. 1. ECMS III, 200; Stuart, John, Sculptured Stones of Scotland, vol. I, Aberdeen 1856, pl. 41, no. 1 (hereafter: SSS I).
345. Stuart, John, Sculptured Stones of Scotland, vol. II, Edinburgh 1867, pls. 30-1, 34 (hereafter: SSS II); ECMS III, figs. 389-390.
346. SSS II, pl. 35. The Z-rod of the second Court Cave Double Disc is strongly reminiscent of the prehistoric "cup, ring and stroke signs" in Scotland and Ireland. See Breuil, Henri, "Presidential Address for 1934", Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia VII, 1932-4, figs. 1, 5, 29, 40.
347. Ritchie, James 1915, 35-6; SSS II, pl. XV. no. 2; ECMS III, 201: Stonehaven No. 5.
348. SSS II, pl. 31; ECMS III, fig. 390.
349. It is not at all clear if a Double Disc is depicted on Tillytarmont No. 3, which is not included in the total. See Ferguson, William, "Two Pictish Symbol Stones Found at Tillytarmont, Rothiemay, Aberdeenshire", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 88, 1954-6, 224, pl. XLII, 2.
350. ECMS III, fig. 189.
351. Ritchie, J. N. Graham and Ritchie, P. R., "Pictish stones from Lindores and Westfield Farm, Fife", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 112 (1982), 1983, 563-4, pl. 39a. The original versions of the typological charts given here were drawn up before the Westfield Farm stone was published.
352. Thomas 1964, 51, fig. 4.15; Henderson 1979, 24.
353. ECMS III, fig. 438; Thomas, A. Charles, "Abercorn and the Provincia Pictorum", Between and Beyond the Walls: Essays on the Prehistory and History of North Britain in Honour of George Jobey,\* Edinburgh 1984, 327; Radford 1953, 239.

\*edd. Roger Miket and Colin Burgess



354. Henderson 1958, 50n; Henderson 1967, 114.
355. Radford 1953, 238-9.
356. ECMS III, fig. 105.
357. List in ECMS II, 68.
358. Stevenson 1955, 110; Henderson 1979, 23-4.
359. Ritchie, J. N. G. and Ritchie, P. R. 1983, pl. 39a.
360. Ritchie, J., 1915, fig. 3; SSS II, pl. XV, no. 2; ECMS III, 201; Stonehaven No. 4.
361. ECMS III, fig. 189.
362. Ibid., figs. 48A and B.
363. Thomas 1964, 61.
364. ECMS III, 111, fig. 114.
365. Ibid., II, 58.
366. Ibid., III, fig. 304B.
367. Thomas 1964, 54.
368. See, for example, Fox 1958, fig. 40.
369. Adomnán 1961, 63, 226, 290, 388, 448, 516; see also Smyth 1984, 56-7; Thomas 1964, 54n.
370. ECMS III, fig. 344; Chalmers, Patrick, The Ancient and Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus, Edinburgh 1848, 9-10.
371. ECMS II, 58, 95.
372. Ibid., II, 58, 95; III, 210.
373. Ibid., III, 210.
374. Thomas 1964, 59, 59n; for British La Tène mirrors, see Fox 1948; Fox 1958, pl. 57a, figs. 50, 55, 60.
375. Ibid., pl. 57c.
376. Thomas 1964, 59; for Taranis, see Mac Cana, Proinsias, Celtic Mythology, London 1970, 29, 31, 34.
377. Ferguson 1956, 224, pl. XLII, 2.
378. SSS II, pl. 36.
379. Morris, Ronald W. B., "The Cup-and-Ring Marks and Similar Sculptures of Scotland: A Survey of the Southern Counties, Part II", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 100, 1967-8, 62;

- Morris, R. W. B., The Prehistoric Rock Art of Argyll, Poole 1977, 90.
380. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll An Inventory of the Monuments, vol. 3, Mull, Tiree, Coll and Northern Argyll, Edinburgh 1980, 10.
381. ECMS III, fig. 389.
382. ECMS I, fig. 13; Henderson 1979, 22, 24.
383. Stevenson and Emery 1964, 207, 207n, pl. XI.3.
384. ECMS I, lxxxiv.
385. Henderson 1979, 24-5.
386. Stevenson 1959, 41.
387. ECMS II, 66; III, 111, fig. 114.
388. Ibid., III, fig. 301.
389. Ashmore 1981, 348; Edwards 1926, 179.
390. Dr. Henderson has informed me that an additional Rectangle, whose outline expands at two diagonally opposite corners to form circular projections, occurs on a stone recently found at Kintore.
391. Jackson, K., 1955b, 141-2; Padel 1972, 93-8.
392. ECMS III, 46.
393. Small, Alan, "Fairyglen, Collace, Perthshire", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 95, 1961-2, 221-2; ECMS III, fig. 209.
394. Ibid., figs. 245B, 258B.
395. Ibid., fig. 17.
396. Ibid., 29; Ashmore 1981, 348, 352; Edwards 1926, 179.
397. ECMS III, 29.
398. Padel 1972, 107.
399. Henderson 1972, 170.
400. ECMS II, 67.
401. Ibid., III, 61, fig. 58.
402. Ibid., II, 85; III, 154-5, fig. 161.
403. Ibid., III, fig. 38.
404. Henderson 1979, pl. IV; Ritchie, J. N. G. and Ritchie, P. R., 1983, 563-4, pl. 39b.

405. ECMS III, fig. 43.
406. Stevenson 1959, 35.
407. ECMS III, 174.
408. Thomas 1964, 50, 53, fig. 4.18.
409. Radford 1953, 237.
410. Thomas 1964, 57; Fox 1958, 130, pl. 75.
411. ECMS III, 180-1; Ritchie, James, 1915, 39.
412. Stevenson 1952, 110-1, pl. XXI.
413. Gordon, C. A., "The Pictish Animals Observed", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 98, 1964-6, 219.
414. ECMS III, 200; SSS I, pl. 41, no. 2; Ritchie, James, 1915, fig. 2.
415. ECMS III, fig. 28.
416. Ibid., fig. 102.
417. Ibid., fig. 196.
418. Ibid., fig. 234B.
419. Ibid., figs. 130A, 183, 185.
420. Stevenson 1959, pl. III.
421. ECMS III, fig. 56.
422. Ibid., fig. 48B.
423. Ibid., fig. 250B.
424. Ibid., figs. 30A and 31A.
425. Ibid., figs. 39, 197; Gordon 1966, 219.
426. For the cave Fish, see ECMS III, figs. 135, 390.
427. For Latheron, see Curle 1940, pl. XXII.
428. Jackson, K., 1955b, 139-142.
429. Padel 1972, 112-5.
430. Feachem, R. W., "A New Pictish Symbol-Stone in the Lowlands", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 84, 1949-50, 206-7, pl. XXIV; Thomas 1964, 40.
431. Gordon 1966, 220.

432. Radford 1953, 239.
433. Thomas 1963, 48; Thomas 1964, 34, 72, 94; ECMS II, 76.
434. Calder, C. S. T., 'Notice of Two Standing Stones (One with Pictish Symbols) on the Lands of Peterhead Farm, near Gleneagles, Perthshire', Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 81, 1946-7, 2.
435. ECMS III, figs. 389-390; SSS II, pls. 31, 33.
436. Werner, Joachim, Die Beiden Zierscheiben des Thorsberger Moorfundes, Berlin 1941, 36-42, pls. A, 1.1, 3-4, 17.
437. Megaw, J. V. S., Art of the European Iron Age, Bath 1970, 33, 134, 235; See also Mac Cana 1970, 105.
438. Henderson 1967, 125, pls. 37-8.
439. Gordon 1966, 221; Thomas 1963, figs. 15d-d'.
440. Gordon 1966, 221.
441. Thomas 1963, 48; Love, John A., The Return of the Sea Eagle, Cambridge 1983, 108-9, fig. 47. I am most grateful to John Love, whom I met in the Isle of Rum in July of 1984, for bringing his book to my attention.
442. Thomas 1964, 94.
443. Thomas 1963, 48.
444. Curle 1940, pl. XXIIb; Henderson 1967, pl. 52.
445. ECMS III, fig. 108; Gordon 1966, 217, pl. XXIX.2.
446. See note 331 above.
447. Curle 1940, 67; Curle and Henry 1943, 261n; ESSH I, 233; AU, 188.
448. Thomas 1964, 40, 40n; Radford 1953, 238-9.
449. Alcock 1981, 167; Alcock 1982, 229; Ritchie, J. N. G. and Ritchie, A., 1981, 154.
450. Jackson, K. H., 'The Ogam Inscription at Dunadd', Antiquity 39, 1965, 301-2.
451. Gordon 1966, 217.
452. Jackson, K., 1965, 302.
453. Padel 1972, 12, 91-2; see also Lane 1984, 46-7, 49.
454. ESSH I, 213; AU, 166; for Campo Manorn, see Jackson, K., 1969, 71-4.
455. ESSH I, 214; AU, 168.

456. ESSH I, 221-6; AU, 178-182; Henderson 1967, 61-2; Anderson, M., 1980, 86, 177-8, 182-4; Smyth 1984, 72-6.
457. Jackson, K., 1969, 6, 103, 108, 130.
458. Knott, Eleanor, Togail Bruidne Da Derga, Dublin 1975 (reprint of 1936 edition), 23. The Pictish king Bruide son of Derile is described in the guarantor list of the Law of Adomnán of 697 as ri Cruithintuathi. See Ní Dhonnchadha 1982, 181, 214; Adomnán 1961, 60.
459. The suggestion that the Dunadd boar may refer to Pictish mercenaries in Dál Riata was made to me by my Supervisor, John Higgitt, after he read an earlier draft of this chapter. The supporting evidence occurred to me after he made the suggestion.
460. See, in this regard, Henderson 1967, 110.
461. Thomas 1964, 59-61.

### III. CROSS-MARKED AND CRUCIFORM STONES

Christians in the West Highlands and Islands began to cut the figures of crosses on upright pillar stones, boulders, recumbent slabs, cruciform stones, and natural rock formations by the late sixth century, perhaps slightly before Class I Pictish symbol stones were first set up in the Pictish heartland. Crosses incised on prehistoric standing stones, living rock or stray boulders, pecked out with hammer and chisel or scraped with a sharp point on the surfaces of small stones set flat on the ground, or larger stones set upright, may have served as boundary markers, tombstones or devotional objects. Comparisons between the forms of crosses found in the West Highlands and Islands and those found elsewhere may lead to a better understanding of the earliest Christian influences on sculpture in Dál Riata, the extent to which such influences were lost or maintained and the variety of outside influences available when the free-standing crosses of the Iona School were set up and carved. Christianity and the Gaelic language were brought to the West Highlands and Islands by the Scotti themselves. The review below of the circumstances of the Irish migration to Argyll and the development of early Christianity west of Druimalban is followed by a discussion of the forms of incised crosses used during the first few centuries of Christianity in the West Highlands and Islands.

#### The Settlement of Dál Riata

Fergus Mór mac Eirc, king of the Irish kingdom of Dál Riata, left his Irish capital, presumably Dunseverick in Antrim, and took up permanent residence in Argyll c. 500 A.D., a move recorded in the Annals of Tigernach but not in the Annals of Ulster.<sup>1</sup> No Irish annal entry can be accepted as contemporary at so early a date but the ruling



kindred of Dál Riata was certainly well established in Scotland by 575, when the Convention of Druim Cett was held to determine the political and military position of Irish Dál Riata in regard to its rulers in Argyll and to other northern Irish kindreds.<sup>2</sup> The conclusions reached at Druim Cett are mentioned in the Preface, compiled in the tenth century, to the Amra Choluim Chille, which was probably written in the seventh century.<sup>3</sup> According to the Preface, it was decided at Druim Cett that Irish Dál Riata would pay tax and tribute to its Scottish kings, its fleet would be at the sole disposition of Scottish Dál Riata, but it would still owe military service on land to the "men of Ireland". Dr. Bannerman, noting that the Preface deals with the same three issues covered by the seventh-century Senchus Fer nAlban ("History of the Men of Scotland"), taxes, the army and the navy, accepts the Preface as the earliest "detailed account of the proceedings".<sup>4</sup> The accommodation reached at Druim Cett is now thought to mark a treaty between Aedán mac Gabráin, king of Scottish Dál Riata, and Áed mac Airmirech of the Cenél Conaill, effective ruler of the northern Uí Néill, by which Aedán gained virtual independence in Scotland in return for supporting Áed in Ireland. Agreement between Aedán and Áed undercut the position of Báetán mac Cairill, ruler of the Ulaid, a group that included the Irish Dál Riata, Dál Fiatach and Dál nAraide.<sup>5</sup> Both Áed and Aedán were well served by the decision of Druim Cett: Báetán challenged Uí Néill rule in Ireland and exacted submission from Aedán in 574 or 575.<sup>6</sup> The rise of the Uí Néill in the northern half of Ireland in the second half of the fifth century may well have prompted the original Dalriadic settlement in Argyll.<sup>7</sup> By the last quarter of the sixth century, Scottish Dál Riata was strong and independent enough to seek Uí Néill allies.

Scottish Dál Riata constituted a kingdom and a collection of kindreds. The extant versions of the Senchus Fer nAlban derive from a

seventh-century original and are the primary source for the three principal kindreds of Scottish Dál Riata. Their genealogies are given in the Senchus and in the Genelaig Albanensium, an appendix to the Senchus which traces the ancestry of the main cenéla of the Dál Riata from Fergus Mór or one of his brothers.<sup>8</sup> Three separate cenéla or kindreds can be distinguished in Scottish Dál Riata by the mid-seventh century. The Cenél nOengusa, named after an alleged brother of Fergus Mór, held Islay. The Cenél Loairn were named for another of the supposed brothers of Fergus, gave their name to the mainland district of Lorn and probably also controlled the islands of Mull, Coll, Tiree, Colonsay, and Oronsay, as well as the smaller islands in the Firth of Lorn.<sup>9</sup> It may have taken a few generations for the Cenél Loairn to gain control of Morvern and the mainland districts north of Mull. W. J. Watson linked Morvern, an old name of which was Kinelvadon, with Báetán, a great-grandson of Loarn mac Eirc according to the Genelaig, although Báetán is mentioned in only one manuscript version of the Senchus.<sup>10</sup> Watson also identified Morvern as A' Mhorbhairn, or "sea-gap", the pre-Norse name of Loch Sunart.<sup>11</sup> Morvern was certainly inhabited by Gaels well before the first Viking raids and may have been the territory of the Cenél Bháetáin or Kinelvadon, who could only have begun to gain control of Morvern from their probable Pictish predecessors during Columba's lifetime. The Cenél nGabraín took their name from Gabrán, grandson of Fergus and father of Aedán, and ruled Kintyre, Cowal and possibly Jura. Bute probably pertained to the Cenél nGabraín, given its proximity to Cowal or Crích Chomgaill, the territory of the Cenél Comgaill, who claimed descent from a brother of Gabrán's and who functioned as a separate kindred by the beginning of the eighth century.<sup>12</sup> The genealogy of the Cenél Comgaill is given in the Genelaig Albanensium but the tribe is not discussed as such in the Senchus.<sup>13</sup> Control of

Knapdale may have been split between the Cenél Loairn and the Cenél nGabráin. Dunadd, just across the River Add from the northern limits of Knapdale, was a stronghold of the Cenél Loairn, while Tairpert Boitter, burned by the Cenél Loairn in 731, was apparently a stronghold of the Cenél nGabráin somewhere near Tarbert, at the juncture of Kintyre and Knapdale.<sup>14</sup>

There is some indication that two of the cenéla of Scottish Dál Riata were already established as separate entities before Fergus Mór left Antrim for Argyll. The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick and Patrician material in the Book of Armagh record the visit of St. Patrick to a bishop Nem in Ireland at Telach Ceiniuil Oengossa, the name of a place among the Irish Dál Riata.<sup>15</sup> Thus the Cenél nOengusa may already have been a recognizable kindred in Ireland in the fifth century. In view of the account of the Scottish migration under dux Reuda given by Bede, who does not mention Fergus Mór, Dr. Bannerman has called attention to De Maccaib Conaire, an account in the Book of Leinster of several Érainn<sup>16</sup> kindreds, including the Dál Riata, who came from Brega, roughly east Meath, and went to Munster, where they allied themselves with the rising Eoganachta against the native Érainn. The invading Érainn are all supposed to have derived from three sons of Conaire Mór, presumably the Conaire Mór mac Eterscela whose heroic death is described in The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel.<sup>17</sup> One of the three sons named in De Maccaib Conaire is Cairpre Riata. The Genelaig Albanensium makes Fergus Mór mac Eirc a tenth generation descendant of Cairpre Riata, himself the great-great-grandson of Conaire Mór and the son of Conaire Cóem mac Moga Lama.<sup>18</sup> Confusion between Conaire Mór mac Eterscela and Conaire Cóem mac Moga Lama is understandable: both are sometimes described as cóem ("gentle") in other genealogies.<sup>19</sup> Prefaces to two versions of the Amra Choluim Chille state that famine forced Cairpre Riata to leave Munster with his people,

first for Ulster, then for Pictland.<sup>20</sup> Bannerman has established that the Senchus Fer nAlban is a tenth-century edition of a seventh-century original which had gathered a number of accretions in the intervening three centuries, including parts of the Genelaig, but the genealogies of the Cenél nGabráin, nOengusa and Loairn were included in the seventh-century original.<sup>21</sup> The tenth-century Senchus is the earliest source, however, to state that Fergus Mór, Oengus and Loarn were brothers, "in what seems to be a later edition of an existing document".<sup>22</sup> According to Bannerman, Fergus Mór alone was named as a son of Erc in the original Senchus.<sup>23</sup> We have seen that a tradition alive in the early ninth century, the date of the Book of Armagh, placed St. Patrick in an Irish territory of the Cenél nOengusa in the fifth century. Bannerman's exhaustive study of the Senchus suggests that the Cenél Loairn could be "of the same vintage". The Senchus lists seven sons of Loarn, each the progenitors of their own kindreds, an arrangement that "seems too schematized to be likely". The description of the Cenél Loairn in the original version of the Senchus probably "consisted of a list of peoples or septs collectively called the Cenél Loairn".<sup>24</sup> Loarn may not have been brother to Fergus Mór but the ruling kindred of the Cenél Loairn may still have descended from Cairpre Riata, Bede's dux Reuda. The Andersons have noted the place-name Cnoc Cairpri ("Cairpre's Knoll"), where Talorgan, brother of the Pictish king Oengus son of Fergus, defeated Muiredach son of Ainfcellach in 736, while Oengus himself was taking Dunadd. Muiredach was head of the Cenél Loairn. The Annals of Ulster place Cnoc Cairpri at Etar Linddu ("between the pools"). Part of the modern estate of Ederline lies between the southwestern tip of Loch Awe and the much smaller Loch Ederline, where there are several low hills, one of which was regarded as a "spot of ill-omen" as late as the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Bede may thus have had access to an early account

of Irish settlement in Argyll, one that reflected the presence of Irish immigrants in Scotland before the arrival of Fergus Mór, and Bannerman suggests the possibility that Bede's informant might have been Adomnán, who visited Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, where Bede could have met him.<sup>26</sup> There is, however, no reason to doubt that Fergus Mór mac Eirc was the first king of Dál Riata to govern both his Irish and his Scottish lands from Argyll. The difference between the information available to Bede and that contained in the later version of Senchus Fer nAlban may be ascribed to the periodic genealogical tidying-up exercises Irish and Scottish Gaels indulged in throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>27</sup>

### Airgialla in Argyll

The cenéla of Dál Riata were not the only Irish peoples to settle in Scotland west of Druimalban before the arrival of Viking raiders and settlers added a new intrusive element to the population of the West Highlands and Islands. According to the Senchus, one seventh of the military complement of the Cenél Loairn were Airgialla and the Annals of Ulster record the deaths of Airgialla in a battle fought between the Cenéla nGabraín and Loairn in 727.<sup>28</sup> The Airgialla, whose name means "hostage-givers", originated in the Irish Midlands and became a subject people of the Uí Néill, who granted them lands in south and central Ulster between the Ulidian kingdoms, including Irish Dál Riata, and the lands of the Uí Néill themselves. Uí Néill pressure on the Airgialla in the fifth century, pushing the latter eastward, may have been a contributing factor to Dalriadic emigration to Argyll.<sup>29</sup>

Bannerman has focused attention on Connamail mac Failbi, who apparently succeeded Adomnán as abott of Iona in 704.<sup>30</sup> Connamail's predecessors, from Columba to Adomnán, belonged to the northern Uí Néill, with the possible exception of Suibne, the sixth abbott, whose genealogy

is unknown.<sup>31</sup> Connamail, however, was a member of the Uí Macc Uais, an Airgialla kindred.<sup>32</sup> Bannerman supports the Andersons' contention that the elevation to the abbacy of one of the Airgialla of Argyll may have been due to the patronage of the Cenél Loairn, who had emerged as the dominant kindred of Scottish Dál Riata by the end of the seventh century.<sup>33</sup>

W. D. H. Sellar found fifteen manuscript sources for the genealogy of Somerled mac Gilla-Brigte, the twelfth-century lord of Argyll and the Isles and progenitor of Clan Donald, according to all of which Somerled claimed descent from Colla Uais, from whom the Uí Macc Uais took their name.<sup>34</sup> Sellar was particularly struck by two entries in the Annals of the Four Masters:

836 Gofraidh mac Fearghus, a nobleman of the Airgialla, went to Scotland at the request of Kenneth mac Alpin.

853 Gofraidh mac Fearghus, a lord of the Hebrides, died.<sup>35</sup>

Gofraidh mac Fearghus was a descendant of Colla Uais and an ancestor of Somerled.

Dr. Bannerman has concluded from the foregoing that elements of the Northern Uí Macc Uais, one of the Irish kindreds of the Airgialla, had settled in Scottish Dál Riata by the seventh century, the date of the original version of the Senchus, where they provided the same sort of subordinate service to the Cenél Loairn they had previously given the Uí Néill in Ireland. In Bannerman's view, "the apparent removal of their ruling family from Ireland to Scotland in the ninth century in the person of Gofraid, son of Fergus, seems to echo, though doubtless on a smaller scale, the advent of the Dalriadic dynasty in the person of Fergus mac Eirc c. 500".<sup>36</sup>

#### Archaeological Evidence

Dunadd is the only major Dalriadic secular site extensively



excavated to date. The two major excavations conducted at Dunadd in 1905 and 1929 were methodologically mediocre, even by the standards of the day, and many problems of interpretation remain.<sup>37</sup> A socketed axe and four fragments of Samian ware found at Dunadd have been seen as evidence of Iron Age occupation and some historians continue to see the Samian ware from Dunadd as an indication that Dunadd was the major stronghold of the Epidii, the P-Celtic tribe in Kintyre mentioned in Ptolemy's map.<sup>38</sup> Dunadd was a centre of the Cenél Loairn in the seventh and eighth centuries while the Cenél nGabraín controlled Kintyre and the territorial division between the two Dalriadic kindreds may reflect the arrangements of previous inhabitants. According to Ptolemy's map, the Creones were the tribe north of the Epidii. Professor Watson placed the lands of the Creones between the River Add and Loch Leven to the north, although others believe Loch Leven was the southern boundary of the Creones.<sup>39</sup> The fort at Cnoc Airich near Southend in Kintyre enclosed an area of two to five hectares and may have been a capital of the Epidii,<sup>40</sup> but they might well have had another such centre near their northern border, wherever that was. Professor Thomas, whose study of imported pottery in Dark Age Britain remains seminal, would not date the D and E ware sherds found at Dunadd before the end of the fifth century and no archaeologist, including the 1929 excavator, is willing to date the Dark Age occupation of Dunadd earlier than the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>41</sup> Dr. Alan Lane has most recently shown that "none of the claimed evidence that the fort at Dunadd is Iron-age in date bears critical examination".<sup>42</sup>

A number of other secular sites have been identified, some only tentatively, in the mainland territory of Dál Riata, but few have been excavated. Alcock's preliminary excavations at Dunollie have not been fully published, but he would not date any of the evidence found there

earlier than the late seventh century.<sup>43</sup> In Kintyre, glass beads found at Dùn Fhinn and the fort at Kildalloig and a pennanular brooch found at the Kildonan Bay dun may indicate early medieval occupation.<sup>44</sup> Dùn an Fheurain, an Iron Age fort in Lorn, was probably re-occupied in the sixth century or later and any of the twenty crannogs identified in Loch Awe might have been built or re-occupied by the Dál Riata, although none has been excavated to date.<sup>45</sup> The supposition that the removal of the Dalriadic royal house to Argyll at the beginning of the sixth century followed Dalriadic settlement in the late fifth century cannot be proven by the archaeological evidence.

### Ecclesiastical Development

History, hagiography and the archaeological evidence for the early church in the West Highlands and Islands do not often coincide, with a few notable exceptions, such as Iona, Lismore and Applecross. Place-names mentioned in the documentary record were frequently lost, presumably during the period of Norse supremacy. Some sites exhibiting features of early monastic communities must be left to the archaeologists alone when there are no written records for such sites. Dedications to particular saints may only refer to later cults. Taken as a whole, however, some sense can be made of the disparate evidence available.

The earliest datable Irish saint in the Scottish Highlands was St. Fillan of Strathearn. Faelán, called amlabar or "the Dumb", was "of Ráith Érem in Scotland, near Glem drochta in the west", according to the later Notes added to the Martyrology of Oengus in the fifteenth-century manuscript Laud 610, "from Stráth Érem in Scotland", according to the early fifteenth century Rawlinson B.505.<sup>46</sup> His genealogy is given in the fourteenth-century Leabhar Breac: Faelán of Rath Érem in Scotland was the son of Oengus, son of Nad Fraích, son of Corc of Cashel

of the Munster Eoganachta.<sup>47</sup> Faelán's father, Oengus son of Nad Fraích, was slain in battle in 490.<sup>48</sup> Oengus is said to have been converted by St. Patrick, although the Eoganachta may already have been Christian. Pagan inauguration rites are associated with other Irish provincial capitals but not with Cashel, which takes its name from Latin castellum and was traditionally said to have been founded as the result of a Christian vision. Christians among the early Eoganachta reflect British influence. Corc's mother may have been British and Munster kindreds had colonies in Wales and Cornwall by the fourth century, some of which were driven from Wales at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>49</sup> Christianity was established among Faelán's own kindred by his lifetime. Watson related the Scottish Gaelic place-name Ràth Éireann to the Raterne or Ratherne on record in the earldom of Strathearn in 1466 and 1488, which he identified as Rottearns, to the southeast of Loch Earn in the parish of Ardoch, but as that is outside the valley of the Earn, he suggested ràth may have meant a district.<sup>50</sup> In Old Irish, however, ráth Érenn could also mean "fort of the Irishmen". St. Fillan or Faelán is traditionally associated with Strathearn, Strathfillan and Glendochart, where there was a monastery of St. Fillan, and is likely to have been active in the early sixth century.<sup>51</sup>

Two of Columba's great Irish contemporaries started churches or monasteries in Tiree, perhaps slightly before Columba founded Iona. Brenaind moccu Alti, Brendan the Navigator, founded a monastery called Bledach in Tiree before his foundation of Clonfert was begun in 558, according to his Latin Life.<sup>52</sup> In his Latin Life, Comgall of Bangor is said to have founded a monastery in Tiree seven years after he founded Bangor, but returned to Ireland after an attack by Pictish raiders, giving a date for the Tiree foundation between 561 and 566.<sup>53</sup> Adomnán mentions several monasteries in Tiree in his Life of St. Columba,

including Artchain and its founder Findchan, whose name may be commemorated at Kilfinichen in Mull despite the serious charges made against him by Adomán, who may only have been repeating an imaginative tradition.<sup>54</sup> Tiree, Adomán's Ethica terra, also boasted a Columban foundation, Mag Lunge, where Iona penitents were placed under the authority of Baíthíne, Columba's kinsman, foster-son and eventual successor at Iona.<sup>55</sup> Soroby in Tiree has been suggested as the site of Mag Lunge but St. Patrick's Chapel at Cearn a' Mhara is the only Tiree site that features the enclosure and hut platforms of an early monastery.<sup>56</sup> A combustio Maige Lunge is recorded in 673 and the death of Conall of Mag Lunge in 775.<sup>57</sup>

Adomán reports that Brendan of Clonfert and Congall of Bangor, accompanied by Cairnech of Aghaboe and Cormac Ua Liatháin, travelled from Ireland to visit Columba and found him on Hinba, an island site formerly identified as Eileach an Naoimh in the Garvellachs<sup>58</sup> but now thought to be somewhere in Jura, in light of geographical features noted by Watson.<sup>59</sup> Columba founded a monastery in Hinba and appointed as its first prior his uncle Ernan, whose name may be contained in Killernadail, the name of the parish church on the east side of Jura in the sixteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

In his Latin Life, Brendan of Clonfert is said to have founded an island monastery in Britain called Ailech.<sup>61</sup> Watson, whose identification of Ailech as Eileach an Naoimh is now generally accepted, noted that another of the Garvellachs is called Cuil Bhrianaim, or "Brendan's Retreat", but Eileach an Naoimh ("Rock of the Saint") is more likely to be the correct form of the name than Watson's na h-Eileacha Naomha ("the Holy Rocks").<sup>62</sup> None of the beehive huts, cemeteries or other early monastic structural remains on Eileach an Naoimh is likely, however, to be as early as Brendan's lifetime.<sup>63</sup>

We do not know when Moluag or Lugaid founded his monastery on the island of Lismore in Loch Linnhe but his death is listed in the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach in 592 and he is commemorated in the Martyrology of Oengus.<sup>64</sup> Tigernach notes the death of a successor, Neman, in 611 and the death of Eochaid, another successor, is listed in Tigernach in 637 and in the Annals of Ulster in 635.<sup>65</sup> The deaths entered in the Annals of Ulster of Iarnlaigh abbatis Liss Moir in 700 and of Macc-Oiged abbatis Liss Moir in 753 have been linked by Skene and others to Moluag's Lismore, but the Irish saint Mo-Chuta founded a monastery at Lismore in County Waterford shortly before his death in 637 and the Mac Óige of 753 is now regarded as an abbot of the Irish Lismore who contributed to the development of the Céilí Dé movement in Ireland in the eighth century.<sup>66</sup> At any rate, the cult of Moluag of Lismore evidently spread throughout the West Highlands and Islands. Kilmaluag is a place-name found in Kintyre, Knapdale, Mull, Tiree, Raasay, Skye, and Lewis, in addition to Lismore.<sup>67</sup>

The monastery founded in Eigg by St. Donnán and destroyed by Pictish pirates in 617 was apparently re-founded in the late seventh or early eighth century. The Annals of Ulster record the death in 725 of Oan princeps Ego and Smyth notes that princeps implies some form of royal patronage and a foundation of wealth and importance.<sup>68</sup> The Annals of Ulster and Tigernach also list the death of Cummene nepos Becce religiosus Ego in 752.<sup>69</sup>

A host of shadowy saints are implied by place-names and dedications but only a few, connected with sites where early medieval sculpture is found, are mentioned here. Ciarán of Clonmacnoise is traditionally associated with Kintyre, where there is a Kilkerran and a St. Ciaran's Cave, but he died young of the plague in 549 and none of his Lives record any visits to Scotland.<sup>70</sup> The name of the possibly sixth-century

Berach of Cluain-coirpthe, Kilbarry in County Roscommon, is contained in that of Kilberry in Knapdale, but the Irish Life of Berach only connects him with Aberfoyle in Perthshire, not Argyll.<sup>71</sup> The name of Taransay, an island off the west coast of Harris that features early ecclesiastical remains, may contain a Pictish personal name. Adomnán mentions Columba's protection of an exiled Pictish nobleman named Taran and a Taran son of Ainfthech succeeded Bruide son of Bili as king of the Picts in 693.<sup>72</sup> Watson, however, thought he was the Torannán said to have churches in Scotland in the Martyrology of Oengus, whose genealogy is given in the Book of Leinster: Torannán son of Oengus son of Áed son of Erc son of Eochaid Munremar.<sup>73</sup> Erc son of Eochaid Munremar was the father of Fergus Mór mac Eirc, so Torannán was related to the Scottish Dál Riata, if the genealogy is correct. Áed son of Erc is not named as one of the twelve sons of Erc in the Senchus Fer nAlban, although he does appear in other genealogies.<sup>74</sup> Watson thought that Kilmaha on Loch Awe might have been a Cill Mo Thatha, dedicated to the Tóe or Tua commemorated on 22 December in the Martyrologies of Oengus and Gorman, but the dedication might have been to Mochoe of Nendrum or to St. Kentigern, who was also known in Gaelic as Moccoe. The last possibility is perhaps most likely, in view of the Balmaha and the nearby "St. Maha's well" at the southeastern corner of Loch Lomond,<sup>75</sup> an area which might well have been British into the eighth century, given its proximity to Dumbarton and its position on the eastern shore of Loch Lomond.

Cille-bharra or Kilbar in Barra and indeed the name of the island itself commemorate the elusive St. Barr whose cult still thrives in Barra and who is usually thought to be Finnbarr of Cork, a bishop and younger contemporary of Columba whose association with Barra is implied by Icelandic stories whose origins may be as early as the ninth century



and which name the Barra group of islands i Barreyjar.<sup>76</sup> Surviving Latin and Irish Lives of Finnbarr do not picture him in Scotland, although notes in the Aberdeen Breviary connect him with a Cathania insula and he is remembered as an early bishop in a local cult in Caithness.<sup>77</sup> A recurring theme in Finnbarr's Latin and Irish Lives concerns a prenatal miracle performed by the foetal future saint: his mother, the daughter of a noble family, was condemned to death by burning by her father upon discovering that she had conceived illegitimately, but Finnbarr vocally proclaimed his holiness while still in utero and the sentence was not carried out.<sup>78</sup> A similar tale is still told in Barra but the Barra version relates that the pregnant mother was to have been put to the sword and that her noble family was in Sutherland, which would seem to recast St. Barr in a Pictish mould.<sup>79</sup> A wooden cross was erected in 1980 on a cairn at Cille-bharra, said to mark the site of "St. Barr's Cross", stolen in the "seventh or eighth century".<sup>80</sup>

#### Knapdale and the Leinster Connexion

Cill Mhic Ó Charmaig at Keills in Knapdale and the nearby island of Eilean Mór Mhic Ó Charmaig were dedicated to the sixth and seventh century Leinster saint Abbán moccu Corbmaic.<sup>81</sup> The Keills dedication is on record by the thirteenth century, the Eilean Mór dedication by the fourteenth.<sup>82</sup> There are no other churches in Scotland dedicated to Abbán.<sup>83</sup> The earliest surviving sculpture at Keills is the early medieval Iona School cross but the earliest surviving sculpture on Eilean Mór is all of a seventh or early eighth-century type (see below). Local tradition associates the founding saint with the island but the dedication alone connects him with Keills, suggesting that the original monastery or hermitage on Eilean Mór expanded to Keills.<sup>84</sup> It is

unlikely that Abbán himself founded an eremitic outpost in the Sound of Jura but a late seventh-century context for a Leinster foundation in Argyll is indicated by the fact that the guarantors of the Law of Adomnán of 697 included St. Moling and bishop Áed of Slebte, both Leinster saints, as well as Cellach Cualann, king of Leinster.<sup>85</sup>

Another of the guarantors, whose name is variously given as Mobecoc Aird and Mobeoc Ard, was the abbot of one of Abbán's foundations, either Cluain Aird Mobecoc in County Tipperary or Camaross in County Wexford.<sup>86</sup>

Cellach Cualann's predecessor in the Leinster kingship, Bran Mut mac Conaill, married Álmaith, a lady of the Dál Riata, whose genealogy in the Book of Leinster gives her great-grandfather's name as Colmán mac Báetáin Cobraind of Dál Riata.<sup>87</sup> If he was the Colmán mac Báetáin named in the Genelaig Albanensium, Álmaith may have belonged to the Cenél Loairn, who are likely to have controlled north Knapdale in the late seventh century.<sup>88</sup> Bannerman, Smyth and Mac Niocaill have also called attention to the tradition of friendship between Iona and the south Leinster monastery of Tech-Murnu, or Taghmon in Wexford.<sup>89</sup>

Dr. Pádraig Ó Riain, whose work on hypocoristic forms of saints' names has much to commend it,<sup>90</sup> rejects the existence of Abbán and equates him with Ailbe of Emly, whose death is variously recorded in 527, 534 and 542.<sup>91</sup> The attribution of the foundation of Cell Ailbe to Abbán is a case of obvious confusion, but Ó Riain's argument, that the proximity of Cluain Aird Mobecoc,<sup>92</sup> or Cell Beccáin, to Emly makes Abbán and Ailbe one and the same, ignores the fact that the death of Beccán of Cluain Aird Mobecoc, who gave the place its name, is recorded c. 690 in the Annals of Ulster, Tigernach and Inisfallen and that Abbán, according to his Lives, installed Beccán there in the first place.<sup>93</sup> Beccán may also have been one of the recipients of the letter of c. 632 on the Easter controversy Cumian sent to abbot Ségéne of Iona and to

Beccán solitario.<sup>94</sup> Alfred Smyth accepts as historical the attack on Abbán's monastery at Camaross in Wexford, mentioned in the Lives, by Cormac mac Diarmata of Uí Bairrche, who was active in the second half of the sixth century.<sup>95</sup> Abbán's death is not recorded in the Annals but Smyth has established "the almost total absence of a record for south-Leinster monasteries before 800 A.D."<sup>96</sup> Abbán lived to a ripe old age, if not the 310 or 317 years credited him in his Lives and Colgan concluded that he probably died towards the end of the first half of the seventh century.<sup>97</sup> The hermitage or small monastery on Eilean Mór is likely to have been founded a generation or two later.<sup>98</sup>

### Archaeological Evidence

No documentary evidence, other than dedications, exists to enlighten us about a number of early Christian sites west of Druimalban. Eremitic activity is suggested by crosses or marigolds carved in St. Ciaran's Cave in Kintyre, St. Columba's Cave on Loch Caolisport in Knapdale and the Priest's Cave on Eilean Mór.<sup>99</sup> Nothing is known of the history of the early burial grounds at Achadh na Cille on the Oib peninsula at the head of Loch Sween or Cladh a' Bhile on the Ellary estate in Knapdale.<sup>100</sup> The remains of early monastic enclosures have been identified at Cladh a' Bhearnaig on Kerrera, Kilmaha in Lorn and on Nave Island off the northern coast of Islay, as well as at the drained Loch Chaluim Chille in Skye and Sgòr nam Ban-Naomha on Canna.<sup>101</sup> Dr. W. Douglas Simpson has suggested that the early medieval underground cell on Eileach an Naoimh, of a type also found at Nendrum and Inis Cealtra, was intended for penitential use, and notes that early medieval bicellular monastic structures, such as the double beehive cell on Eileach an Naoimh, are also found at the enclosed ecclesiastical sites at Annait in Skye and at Sgòr nam Ban-Naomha. The last two examples, however, are more likely

to have been single cells with simple porches.<sup>102</sup> Some of the four isolated burial grounds with circular or subcircular enclosures and some of the fifteen early chapels in Islay, five of which are in circular or oval enclosures, may be of pre-Norse date.<sup>103</sup> The large number of incised crosses and early cross-marked stones is the best indication of the extent of early Christian activity in the West Highlands and Islands, particularly in Kintyre, where no early ecclesiastical site has been identified.<sup>104</sup> The attraction of the early churchmen to isolated places is demonstrated by structural remains, cruciform stones and incised cross slabs on North Rona and two incised cross stones in St. Kilda, the most remote of the Western Isles.<sup>105</sup>

Little archaeological evidence remains at three sites known to history. Field boundaries in the vicinity of the medieval cathedral of Lismore may indicate the line of the vallum of Moluag's monastery.<sup>106</sup> Charles Thomas has traced the oval enclosure of Maelrubai's monastery at Applecross.<sup>107</sup> Natural features at Kildonan in Eigg may have served as part of the monastic enclosure.<sup>108</sup> Early medieval sculpture survives at Kildonan and Applecross but not at Lismore.

### Iona

Columba left Ireland in 563, according to the annals, and founded his principal monastery on Iona in 565, according to Bede, whose date depended upon a source that said Iona had used erroneous Easter tables for 150 years until 715, as Professor Duncan has established.<sup>109</sup> Both the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach depend upon an Iona source and both remark that Conall son of Comgall, king of Dál Riata, gave Iona to Columba, but Bede's Pictish source informed him that Iona had been given to Columba by the Picts.<sup>110</sup> Báetán, the possible grandson of Loarn Mór, may only just have begun to gain control over the mainland districts on

the north side of the Sound of Mull and it may have been prudent of Columba to seek both Pictish and Dalriadic permission to build a monastery on Iona.<sup>111</sup> The Columban church expanded rapidly and soon eclipsed the other paruchiae in the area. The Annals fail to record the successors of Moluag of Lismore after the beginning of the eighth century, at the latest, nor do they mention any successors of Maelrubai of Applecross after the beginning of the ninth century. Particular events in the history of Iona are introduced at the appropriate points in the following pages.

Physical remains of the early centuries of the Iona monastery survive in the form of parts of the vallum, post-holes, pottery, moulds, crucibles, leather fragments, and wooden objects.<sup>112</sup> Recent excavations north of Reilig Odhráin and east of the late medieval Sràid na Mairbh ("Street of the Dead") have produced radiocarbon dates in the mid-sixth century from charcoal in a backfilled drainage ditch, in the second half of the sixth century from peat layers in an early vallum ditch, and a date for a later vallum ditch between 600 and 635, a period of expansion under abbots Fergne and Ségéne.<sup>113</sup> Remains of shoes and other fragments from a leather workshop are also approximately datable between 600 and 635.<sup>114</sup> The visible remains of the vallum north of the Abbey are likely to be later.<sup>115</sup> Iona is the only ecclesiastical site west of Druimalban for which the archaeological evidence confirms the earliest dates given in the documentary record.

### Discussion

No date earlier than the late sixth century is currently put forward for any seemingly early cross-marked stone in the West Highlands and Islands. An early account of the Éraimn, the Genelaig Albanensium and prefaces to the Amra Choluim Chille show that the Dál Riata were in the

service of the Eoganachta of Munster, possibly at the beginning of the fifth century, by which time the latter were probably already Christian. The Dál Riata themselves were presumably Christians when they settled in Argyll, probably beginning in the late fifth century, although the archaeological record provides no date earlier than the early sixth century. It may have taken a century for the Dál Riata to gain complete control of all of the mainland districts of the modern county of Argyll and all of the Inner Hebrides south of Ardnamurchan Point. St. Fillan the "Dumb" may have been the first Irish saint active in the Highlands, if one accepts the genealogy given in the Leabhar Breac and his connexion with Scotland mentioned in fifteenth century manuscripts of the Martyrology of Oengus. If so, the neighbourhood in which he worked was liable to be Pictish at so early a date. Adomnán lends considerable support to the later hagiographical tradition that Brendan of Clonfert and Comgall of Bangor were active in the Hebrides within the decade preceding Columba's establishment of Iona, which became the most successful of several similar ventures. Assuming that the Dál Riata were Christians when they began to settle in Scotland, typologically early cross-marked stones could, on historical grounds, have been carved in the sixth century in Kintyre, Knapdale, Mid-Argyll, Lorn, and Islay before Columba arrived at Iona, while those in Mull and north Argyll west of Loch Limhe probably postdate the foundation of Iona. There is no clear evidence of eremitic or monastic foundations north of Ardnamurchan before the seventh century but simple crosses could have been carved on Tiree slightly before the establishment of the Iona monastery. Historical and hagiographical records are not enough in themselves, however, to assign so early a date to any incised cross in the absence of additional supporting evidence, which must be drawn instead from the study of the development of incised crosses throughout



the British Isles.

### The Earliest Christian Sculpture in Britain and Ireland

Stones of various kinds still held pagan sacred associations when Christianity arrived in Ireland. The cross St. Patrick carved on the stone at Lecc Finn in the Vita Tripartita is often cited in this regard but the word used, cloch, simply means "a stone" and cannot tell us if it was upright or recumbent.<sup>116</sup> Stones of both types were deemed essential to the recognition of pagan high kings at Tara in an eighth-century account of the descendants of Conaire Mór mac Eterscéla. Two "flagstones" (liaic) had to open to allow the king's chariot to pass through and the Lia Fáil, also called the ferp cluiche or "stone penis" and still known locally in the nineteenth century as bod Fhearghusa, the "phallus of Fergus", was apparently set upright and was supposed to screech when the chariot-axle of the future king rubbed against it.<sup>117</sup> The Scottish Stone of Scone was a lecc or recumbent slab.<sup>118</sup> The Irish hero Cú Chulainn is said to have died tied to a standing stone<sup>119</sup> and other undecorated stones were later associated with particular saints.<sup>120</sup> In the West Highlands and Islands, prehistoric standing stones at Tarbert in Jura, Camus nan Geall in Ardnamurchan and Ford, near the western end of Loch Awe, had crosses carved upon them in the early medieval period.<sup>121</sup>

Unshaped pillar stones similar in type to prehistoric megaliths were erected in a Christian context in Wales and southwest Scotland in the fifth and sixth centuries, dates suggested by the Latin and ogham inscriptions on the stones. The ogham alphabet was developed by the Irish in the late fourth century and Irish ogham inscriptions in Wales are proof of Irish settlement there in the fifth century and later.<sup>122</sup> Similar settlements took place in the Isle of Man. An ogham stone from the Ballaqueeny farm near Port St. Mary records the name of an Irish

settler and has been dated in the late fifth century.<sup>123</sup> The only ogham stone in the Hebrides is on Gigha and probably dates from the seventh century.<sup>124</sup> A fragment from Poltalloch in mainland Argyll may have come from a pillar stone and bears the Irish name CRON(A)N.<sup>125</sup> A number of bilingual stones with inscriptions in ogham and Latin are found in Cornwall, Wales and Man. The INGENUI MEMORIA stone from Lewannick, Cornwall, is generally dated in the early sixth century and the VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS stone at Castell Dwyran in Carmarthenshire is thought to belong to the middle of the same century.<sup>126</sup> The AMMECAT FILIUS ROCAT bilingual stone at Knock y Doonee, Andreas in the Isle of Man may commemorate an Irish settler of the late fifth century.<sup>127</sup>

Some memorial stones with Latin inscriptions reflect the influence of formulae used in Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>128</sup> Evidence of direct Gaulish influence is provided by two Welsh stones. An inscription on a mid-sixth-century pillar stone at Llantrisant in Anglesey uses the phrase famulus Dei, common in Gaul and Spain, and the Gaulish word vasso or "disciple".<sup>129</sup> An inscription at Permachno in Caernarvonshire records that it was carved IN TEMPORE IUSTINI CONSULIS. Justinus was consul in 540 and his name is found in inscriptions in the Lyon area.<sup>130</sup> The practice of inscribing pillar stone memorials in Latin appeared in southwest Scotland at an early date. Raleigh Radford dates the LATINUS stone at Whithorn to the fifth century, although Jackson would argue for an early sixth-century date.<sup>131</sup>

The first Christian symbol found with inscriptions on stone sculpture in the British Isles is the Chi-Rho monogram in its simplified form of a cross with a loop or hook for the Rho on the top arm. The earliest monuments of the type are the stones of FLORENTIVS and the bishops VIVENTIVS ET MAVORIVS at Kirkmadrine, dating perhaps from the second half of the fifth century.<sup>132</sup> The VIVENTIVS ET MAVORIVS stone also

features the Alpha and Omega, alluded to by the Kirkmadrine INITIVM ET FINIS stone, dated by Raleigh Radford to c. 600.<sup>133</sup> Professor Thomas would now date both the VIVENTIVS ET MAVORIVS and INITIVM ET FINIS stones to the sixth century, the latter probably later than the former.<sup>134</sup> The dates of the two earliest Welsh Chi-Rhos found with inscriptions, at Pennmachno and Treflys in Caernarvonshire, probably fall between those of the VIVENTIVS ET MAVORIVS and INITIVM ET FINIS Kirkmadrine stones.<sup>135</sup> The Alpha and Omega are shown on a lead coffin found at Llangeinwen in Anglesey in 1878, which may be as early as the fifth century, and the roundel of a pottery lamp from Dinas Emrys in north Wales with a Chi-Rho monogram and an Alpha and Omega may be contemporary, but no other Welsh examples of the Alpha and Omega are likely to date before the ninth century.<sup>136</sup> Cross-marked stones with Latin inscriptions are common in Wales.<sup>137</sup>

The ogham alphabet was probably devised in the fourth century by Irishmen living in Britain, where they became acquainted with the existence of the Latin alphabet. The ogham alphabet was a system of straight grooves which could easily be cut into message-sticks and seems to have been transferred by its Irish inventors in Britain to southeast Ireland and from there to all of southern Ireland.<sup>138</sup> Irish inscriptions in the ogham alphabet were rapidly replaced by the Roman alphabet after the introduction of Latin scripts but ogham continued to be used on occasion and an ogham inscription at Arraglen in County Kerry, accompanied by a Chi-Rho, has been read as "Ronán the priest son of Comgán" and has been dated linguistically to the seventh century.<sup>139</sup> An ogham inscription is also found on a stone with an encircled Maltese cross at Maumanorig in County Kerry, on a boulder near the entrance of a pre-Christian fortified enclosure.<sup>140</sup> Two crosses with bifid terminals are incised on the earliest datable Irish stone with an inscription in

Latin letters, at Inchagoil in Galway, which contains the archaic Irish patronymic form MACCI and belongs to the sixth century.<sup>141</sup> The Kilmalkedar alphabet stone in Kerry displays an incised cross with spiraliform bifid terminals and has been dated epigraphically to the second half of the sixth century,<sup>142</sup> but few Irish stones with crosses and inscriptions are likely to be so early. The DNE abbreviation on the Reask pillar (Fig. 13a) is somewhat similar to the DNI contraction of Domini at Kilmalkedar but the florid decoration of the Reask stone's cross, using both incision and false relief, represents an advance over the Kilmalkedar stone's crosses and is more likely to belong to the seventh century than the sixth.<sup>143</sup> The Kilnasaggart pillar is later still, its incised crosses and inscription datable to c. 700.<sup>144</sup>

There are only a handful of inscriptions on cross-marked stones in the West Highlands and Islands. Their dating depends instead on stylistic analogies. The best one can hope for is to establish the earliest date at which a particular type of cross might have been carved and its most likely source of origin.

#### Unusual Christian Symbols

Similar incised symbols in two caves in Mull<sup>145</sup> and the decorative features of two crosses incised on the flat natural surface of a stone on Gigha, locally known as the "Holy Stone",<sup>146</sup> are unique in the West Highlands and Islands. The dates of the various carvings in the Nuns' Cave near Carsaig in Mull range from the late sixth to the nineteenth century but all appear to postdate the introduction of Christianity, whereas the markings in the Scoor Cave in Mull are prehistoric in some cases, early medieval in others (figs. 19-20).<sup>147</sup> Two tridents, one in each of the Mull caves, may belong to the early medieval period, although we cannot be sure that either was intended as a Christian

symbol. The crosses on the Gigha "Holy Stone" are unmistakably Christian but include details found nowhere else west of Druimalban.

### The Mull Tridents

The two Mull tridents are of different types. The arms of the trident on the west wall of the Scoor Cave (fig. 11a) bend at right angles, while the trident on the west wall of the Nuns' Cave (fig. 11b) has sloping arms which curve slightly at the ends. The sharply upturned arms of the Scoor Cave trident render its identification as a trident fairly certain. Tridents appeared in the earliest Christian art in the catacombs and are usually thought to represent the Trinity, although Leclercq has also suggested that they recall crosses with a candle on each arm, used in cemeteries for benedictional purposes.<sup>148</sup> Tridents with bent, upturned arms are also found on Merovingian coins of the first half of the seventh century and on a Merovingian buckle from St.-Andre-de-Sangonis in Languedoc.<sup>149</sup> Tridents were commonly incised on sarcophagi lids in Poitou, at Antigny, Saint-Pierre-les-Églises and Civaux, where excavations uncovered fourth and fifth-century trench-graves and long cist burials underneath the lowest level of sarcophagi, supporting a Merovingian date for sarcophagi decorated with tridents.<sup>150</sup> Tridents incised on Poitevin sarcophagi lids include many variant forms,<sup>151</sup> suggesting a possible source for the Nuns' Cave trident. The trident in the Scoor Cave, where no incised symbol is identifiably later than the early medieval period, is perhaps more likely to have served as a Christian symbol than the trident in the Nuns' Cave, which also has a late medieval cinquefoil, masons' marks and a depiction of an eighteenth-century sailing ship incised on its walls (fig. 20).<sup>152</sup> The evidence is meagre, but it is at least possible that the Mull tridents, especially the one in the Scoor Cave, depended upon a

Merovingian source and may reflect the chance wanderings of a Merovingian coin or buckle.

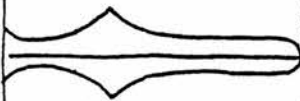
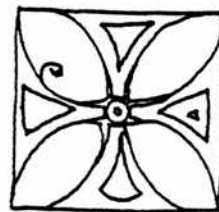
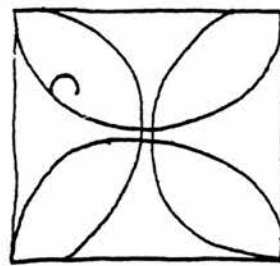
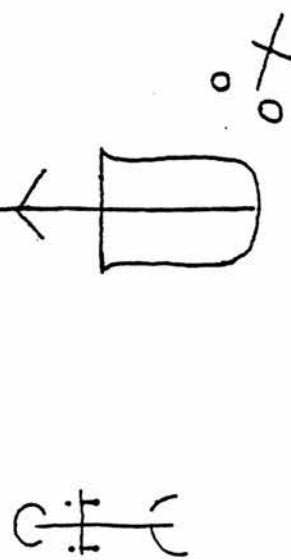
### The "Holy Stone", Tarbert, Gigha

Each of the three crosses incised on the Gigha "Holy Stone" is provided with additional decoration (fig. 11c). The smallest of the three has cup marks on either side of the longest arm and need not concern us here. The largest of the three crosses has bifid terminals, a curved line above its top terminal and a shaft or pedestal that extends beyond its lowest bifid terminal to "bisect a rectangular figure with two right-angled and two curved corners", which may represent "an altar or socket-stone",<sup>153</sup> similar to an Irish leacht. As such, it may merely reflect local clerical custom and need not refer to an artistic influence. Adomnán records that a cross was set in a quern-stone on a spot where Columba sat to rest while making his rounds on the day of his death,<sup>154</sup> so the practice of erecting wooden crosses in socket-stones dates from at least the seventh century, if not the lifetime of Columba.

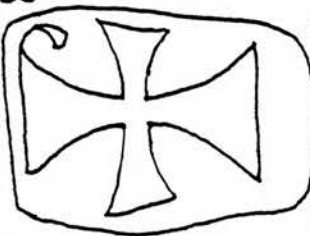
The prolongation of the shaft of the cross in the central symbol on the "Holy Stone" below its bifid terminal suggests some sort of relationship with several Irish carvings. The cross incised on Slab 12 on Inishkea North (fig. 14b) has a similar extension of the shaft below its bifid terminal.<sup>155</sup> The pedestal under the bifid terminal of the Chi-Rho monogram cross on a slab at Cloonlaur, County Mayo, rests atop a Calvary mount (fig. 12h).<sup>156</sup> A cross incised on a pillar stone over a possible grave at Killabuonia, County Kerry, has bifid terminals and a shaft extending to pass through a crude lozenge whose cross-bar intersects the prolonged shaft to create a second cross.<sup>157</sup> A cross with bifid terminals enclosed in a penannular ring with spiral terminals stands atop an elongated shaft or pedestal at Kilvickadownig, Kerry



FIG. 11 EARLY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS WEST OF DUMFRIEGH



(d) CHI RHO, PICTISH SYMBOL STONE, RAASAY HOUSE, (PSAS: 67, p 63) (PSAS: 41, p 486)



(e) CHI RHO, OLD PIER, RAASAY, (PSAS: 67, p 64), (PSAS: 41 p 436).

(f) CHI RHO, LAPIS ECHORD STONE, IONA, (THOMAS 1971: fig 53).

(fig. 14c).<sup>158</sup> Henry related the cross incised on Slab 12 at Inishkea North to a similar cross on fol. 48r of the Cathach of St. Columba (figs. 14a-b) which decorates an initial G.<sup>159</sup> A Hebridean example of the type is provided by an incised cross with expanded terminals placed atop an incised pedestal on a pillar stone at Bàgh na h-Uamha in Rum (pl. 9, fig. 14i).<sup>160</sup> The Cathach, Inishkea North and Rum crosses may prefigure or depend upon Chi-Rho monograms set above a prolonged shaft or pedestal, such as those at Knockane, Kerry (fig. 12e) and Cloonlaur and Inis Cealtra (fig. 12f) in Mayo.<sup>161</sup> The crosses of three of the four extant Hebridean Chi-Rho monograms are provided with pedestals (fig. 11d-e, pl. 10). The motif may have travelled to Ireland and the Western Isles from southern Gaul. The sarcophagus at Mandourel (Aude) of Trasemirus, who may have been a Visigoth, is dated by Edouard Salin to c. 600 and features three equal-armed crosses on extended shafts.<sup>162</sup> The Trasemirus sarcophagus may reflect eastern influence. A Palestinian ampulla or pilgrim's flask, now in Dumbarton Oaks, shows a nimbed bust of Christ over an equal-armed cross set on a long pedestal and placed between two kneeling figures, possibly soldiers, flanked by the two crucified thieves.<sup>163</sup> Three Palestinian ampullae in the treasury at Monza, dating from the sixth or early seventh century and traditionally believed to have been collected by Queen Theodolinda, who died in 625, show the same scene as the Dumbarton Oaks pilgrim's flask, although the central cross has a shorter pedestal.<sup>164</sup> Insular incised crosses with extended shafts may depend upon similar sources.

The third of the crosses incised on the Gigha "Holy Stone", placed to the left of the other two, is decorated with an open ring around the head, a punched dot above and below each arm, the lower ones connected to the arms by incised lines, and a semicircle across the base of the shaft indicating a Calvary mount.<sup>165</sup> The dangling dots below the arms

recall crosses with jewelled pendants on the arms, suspended from seventh-century Visigothic votive crowns,<sup>166</sup> which may have depended upon Byzantine precursors. The gilded silver cross presented to Rome by the Emperor Justin II c. 575 has semi-precious stone pendants beneath its arms.<sup>167</sup> The Alpha and Omega are shown suspended beneath the arms of crosses on the reverse side of some Byzantine coins. A silver half miliarensis that was probably struck in Carthage during the reign of Justinian I (527-565) features an Alpha and Omega beneath the arms of a Chi-Rho monogram<sup>m</sup> cross.<sup>168</sup> A gold tremissis struck in Spain, probably at Cartagena, during the reign of Phocas (602-610) has an Alpha and Omega underneath the arms of a cross with barred terminals.<sup>169</sup> The reverse of a quasi-imperial solidus struck in Marseilles c. 602 shows a cross with expanded terminals on a Calvary mount and two letters, possibly M and A or Δ below its arms, suggestive of a reversed Alpha and Omega.<sup>170</sup> A reversed Alpha and Omega also appear suspended from the arms of a cross sculpted on the marble sarcophagus at Venasque, near the lower Rhône, of bishop Boetius, who died in 603.<sup>171</sup> The Marseilles solidus and the sarcophagus of Boetius may indicate the route taken by the motif on its way to the Gaelic-speaking world. A reversed Alpha and Omega hang beneath the crosslets below the arms of a Chi-Rho monogram cross on the Cloonlaur slab in County Mayo (fig. 12h). The Cloonlaur Chi-Rho stands on a pedestal set in a Calvary mount reminiscent of the crosses on Palestinian ampullae. Pendant dots, crosses or Alphas and Omegas are also placed beneath the arms of crosses on the reverse of some Merovingian coins, especially those of the Second Provencal group of the late sixth and early seventh centuries, some of which feature dots above the arms as well, in the manner of the Gigha "Holy Stone" figure.<sup>172</sup> Françoise Henry suggested a manuscript source for the incised outline cross with pendant Alpha and Omega on a slab at

✓  
Loher in County Kerry, in view of its similarity to the Chi-Rho monogrammatic cross with an Alpha and Omega on fol. 149V of the Codex Usserianus Primus, an early seventh-century manuscript either made in Bobbio by an Irish scribe or in Ireland under Mediterranean influence.<sup>173</sup> Coins and manuscripts cannot, however, account for the nimbus at the head of the "Holy Stone" cross, which might reflect instead an acquaintance with Palestinian pilgrims' flasks that show a nimbed bust of Christ above a cross set in a Calvary mount.

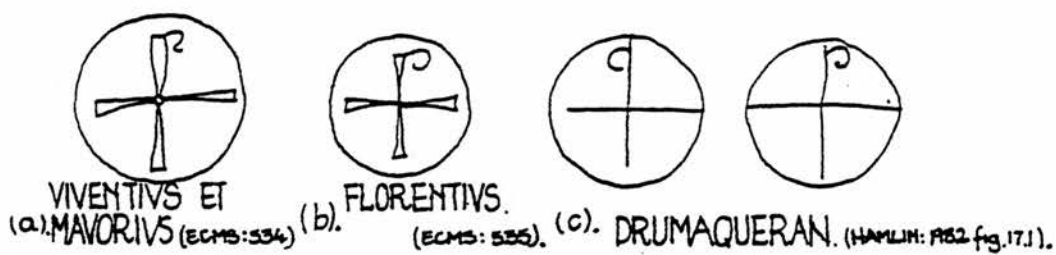
### Chi-Rho Monograms, Crosses of Arcs and Maltese Crosses

There are four identifiable sculpted Chi-Rho monograms in the Hebrides: one on a slab at Iona, another in the Priest's Cave on Eilean Mór in the Sound of Jura and two in a Pictish context on Raasay. The design of all four is based on a compass-drawn cross of arcs. Crosses of arcs other than Chi-Rho monograms are also found west of Druimalban, in addition to "Maltese" crosses, or crosses with expanded arms whose shape recalls that of crosses of arcs but gives no evidence of the use of a compass. Three of the Chi-Rho monograms and several of the crosses of arcs and Maltese crosses have prolonged shafts or pedestals.

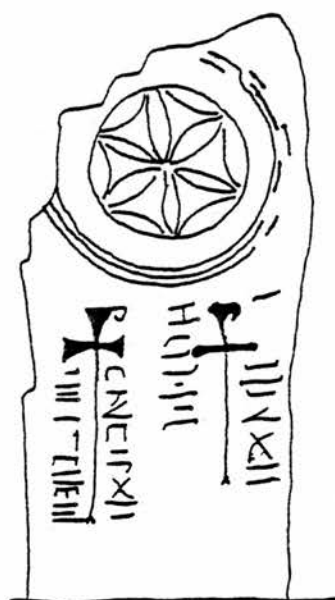
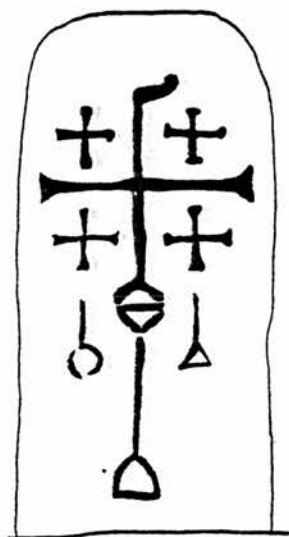
A Chi-Rho monogram comprising a compass-drawn cross of arcs with a small hook for the Rho is incised on a "wedge-shaped", roughly rectilinear stone in the Iona Abbey Museum (fig. 11f), with an incised half-uncial inscription along its top edge reading LAPIS ECHODI which Professor Jackson dates epigraphically to the seventh century.<sup>174</sup> Echoid or Eochaid son of Domangart, a Dalriadic king, died in 697 but there is no other evidence to connect him with this stone.<sup>175</sup>

The two Raasay Chi-Rhos are so similar that they are likely to have been carved by the same Pictish sculptor. One is incised above two Pictish symbols on a dressed slab by the roadside north of Raasay House

FIG. 12 CHI-RHO MONOGRAMS



(d) ARRAGLEN. (HAMLIN: 1982 fig. 17.1). (e) KNOCKANE (HAMLIN 1982 .17.1). (f) INIS CEALTRA (HAMLIN 1982 fig. 17.1).



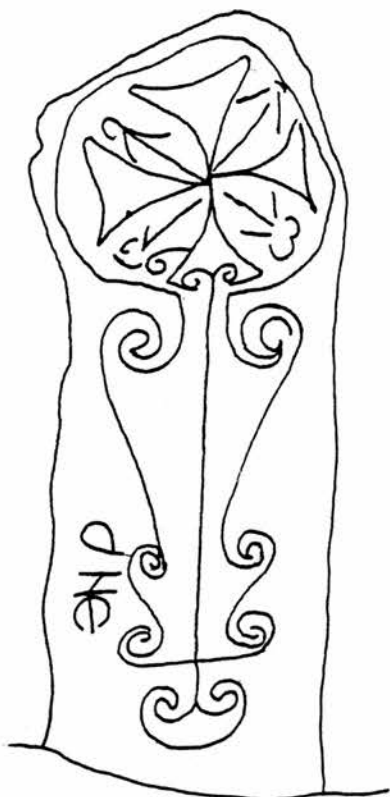
(g) WHITHORN. (ECMS: 537.). (h) CLOONLAUR. (HAMLIN 1982 fig. 17.1). (i) IRNEIT. STONE, MAUGHOLD, ISLE OF MAN. (CUBBOM 1982 pt 16-1).

(figs. 1c, 11d). The other is carved on a rockface near the Old Pier in front of Raasay House (fig. 11e).<sup>176</sup> Both consist of four arcs compass-drawn in a square, creating the four expanded arms of the cross and four almond-shaped leaves or petals between the arms. The four arms of the cross on the symbol stone are decorated with interior triangles. A small incised spiral defines the loop of the Rho in both monograms. An incised line describes the outline of their extended shafts, squared at the end, narrowing at the neck, with pointed projections jutting out on either side of the handle.

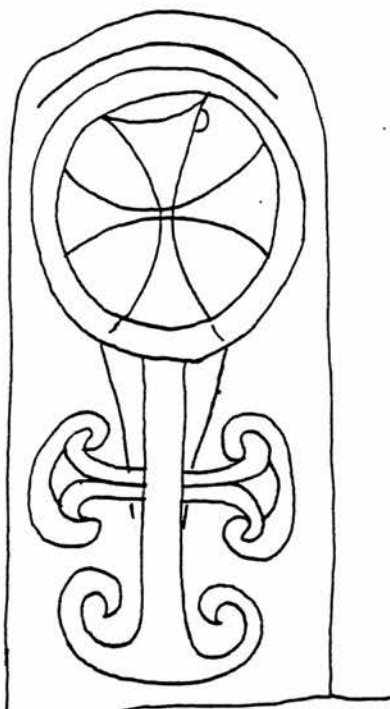
The Chi-Rho cut on the wall of the Priest's Cave on the island of Eilean Mór (pl. 10) is an encircled cross of arcs on a short handle or pedestal. The expansion of the top arm is extended into a curl on the right for the hook of the Rho. The arms of the cross are excised within the circle, calling attention to the four remaining petals left in false relief. The excised pedestal expands at the bottom in imitation of the arms of the cross and tapers to a point at the top.<sup>177</sup>

Dr. Ann Hamlin has mapped the distribution of Chi-Rho monograms in the British Isles.<sup>178</sup> The Constantinian form of the Chi-Rho, which is not found in the West Highlands and Islands, is found in Cornwall, on the Jarrow dedication inscription<sup>179</sup> and possibly on a fragmentary imported bone casket from Mound 3 at Sutton Hoo.<sup>180</sup> The monogrammatic form of the Chi-Rho, based on the figure of a cross, is found in Wales at Permachno and Treflys.<sup>181</sup> The late seventh-century IRNEIT slab from Maughold in Man (fig. 12i) features two incised monograms beneath a finely carved marigold design.<sup>182</sup> Another Manx example is provided by fragment of a slate slab, also from Maughold, which originally seems to have shown an encircled cross of arcs with an Alpha and Omega incised on either side, the hook of the Rho indicated by an incised line to the right of the top arm of the cross.<sup>183</sup> Incised Irish examples with

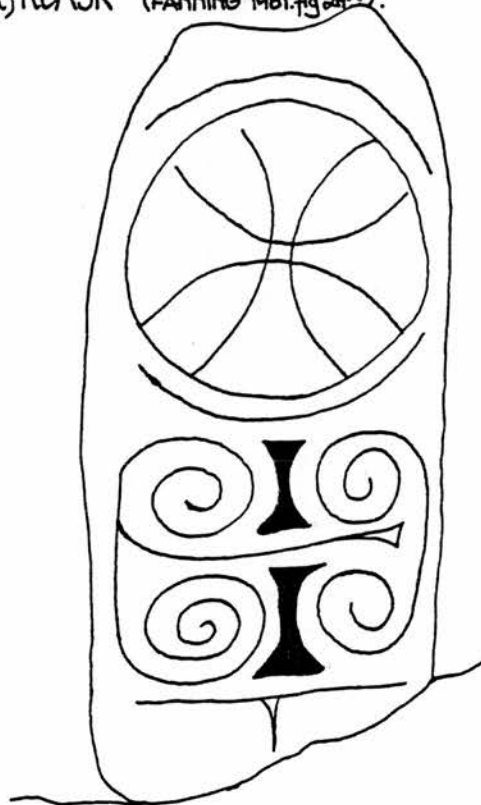




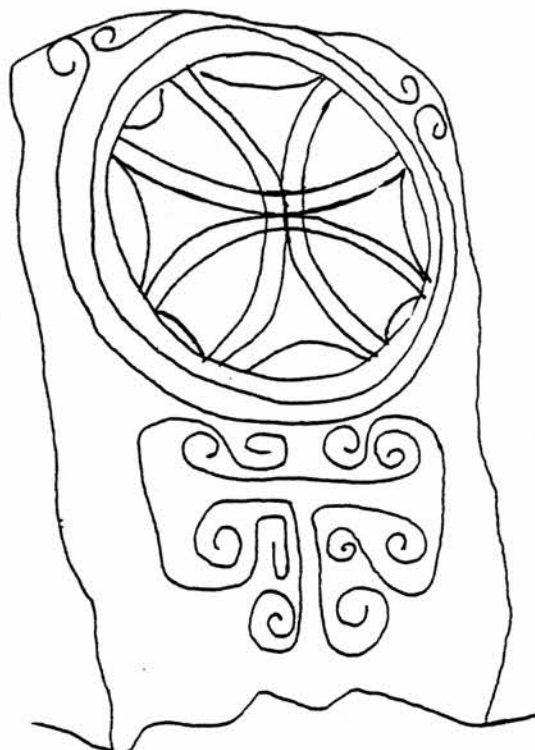
(a) REASK (FANNING 1981, fig. 28A).



(b) INISHKEA NORTH, SLAB 3.  
(HENRY 1947b pl. 16b).



(c) INISHKEA NORTH SLAB 2.  
(HENRY 1947b pl. 16b.)



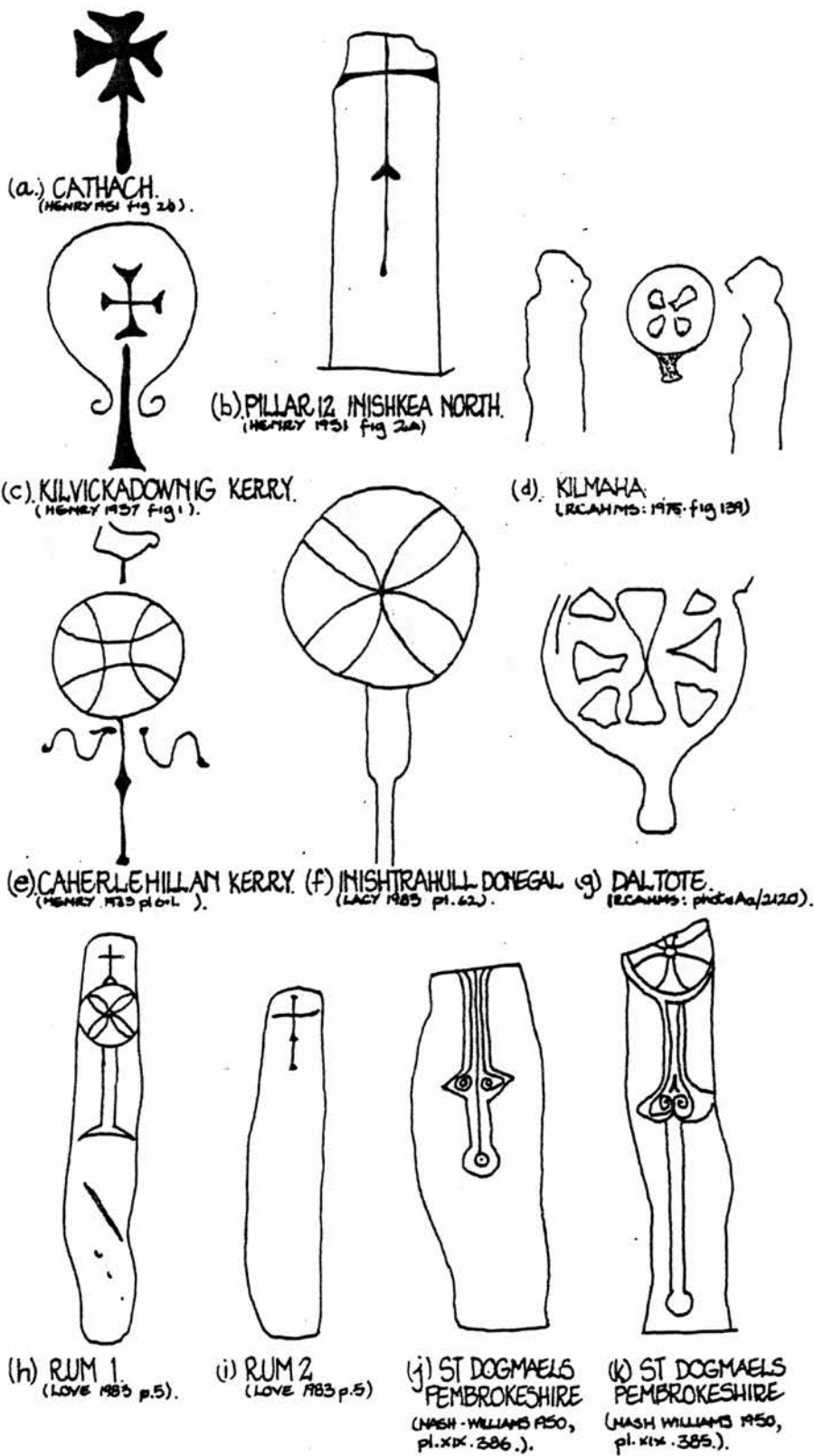
(d) INISHKEA SOUTH  
(HENRY 1947b pl. 14a.)

excised expanded terminals are found in Kerry at Arraglen (fig. 12d), Knockane (fig. 12e), Kilshannig, and perhaps Kilfountain.<sup>184</sup> Knockane has an extended shaft, as does the Inis Cealtra Chi-Rho (fig. 12f). The Cloonlaur Chi-Rho rests on a pedestal (fig. 12h). The Drumaqueran, Antrim Chi-Rhos are encircled but lack extended shafts (fig. 12c). A semicircular line incised along the right side of the top arm of an encircled cross of arcs on a slab on Inishkea North, Henry's Slab 3 (fig. 13b), indicates the Rho of the monogram. The disc of the encircled Inishkea North monogram is supported by a pedestal or handle with a C-scroll pommel and an intersecting transverse bar, placed across the shaft of the pedestal, that has pelta-shaped terminals. Henry identified the supporting device as the handle of a flabellum and related it to the Raasay Chi-Rhos, which Monsignor McRoberts identified as flabella.<sup>185</sup>

The Chi-Rho monogram on the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn (fig. 12g) is in the form of a cross of arcs in a circle, placed on a longer version of the same type of pedestal found beneath the Eilean Mór Chi-Rho. Raleigh Radford has dated it to the early seventh century on epigraphic and stylistic grounds,<sup>186</sup> although it has been suggested that the Petrine formula postdates the Synod of Whitby, but no date much later than c. 700 is seriously considered.<sup>187</sup> Hamlin dates the Chi-Rho stone at Drumaqueran in Antrim between the sixth and eighth centuries, the seventh century providing the most likely historical context, and notes the similarity of its monograms to those of the Kirkmadrine inscribed pillar stones (figs. 12a-c).<sup>188</sup> Galloway may also have exerted an influence on the Hebridean Chi-Rhos, all of which are crosses of arcs and one of which, the Eilean Mór Chi-Rho (pl. 10) has a short handle of a shape similar to that of the PETRI APVSTOLI monogram.

Several crosses of arcs in the West Highlands and Islands are provided with handles or pedestals, although none is a Chi-Rho. A cross

FIG. 14 CROSSES ON PEDESTALS



of arcs inside a ring with the four petals excised stands atop a thin pedestal on the remains of a cruciform stone on Canna (pl. 11).<sup>189</sup> A Maltese cross is carved in false relief on a rock formation at Kilmaha in Lorn, between the incised outlines of two human figures (fig. 14d), with an outer ring, excised interspaces or petals between the arms of the cross and a short sunken handle.<sup>190</sup> The encircled Maltese cross on a cliff face near Daltote Cottage (fig. 14g), to the east of the head of Loch Sween, has a short handle similar to the Kilmaha carving.<sup>191</sup> A pillar stone at Kilmory in Rum (fig. 14h)<sup>192</sup> displays an incised cross above an encircled cross of arcs, the interspaces between the arms left in false relief, supported by a lengthy pedestal with a curved base, somewhat reminiscent of the type found at Whithorn and on Eilean Mór. A fragment of a carved slab at St. Doman's, Eigg (pl. 12, bottom) shows a handle with a distinct pommel below the straight line of what appears to have been a rectilinear form. Another fragment from St. Doman's (pl. 12, top) displays a broad shaft incised in outline.<sup>193</sup> Both Eigg fragments show rectangular brackets at one end of their respective shafts or handles, suggesting the supports of framed Chi-Rhos or crosses of arcs, perhaps related to the Raasay Chi-Rhos.

Framed crosses of arcs on shafts are found in Wales and Ireland. A cross of arcs on a pillar stone at Jeffrestown in Pembrokeshire is attached to a handle that flares out slightly at the bottom like the PETRI APVSTOLI example.<sup>194</sup> Fragments of two slabs at St. Dogmaels in Pembrokeshire (figs. 14j-k) appear to have featured crosses of arcs on long handles with rounded knobs or pommels on the ends and elaborate opposing spirals on either side of the centre of the handle, contained within pointed protrusions similar to those of the Raasay Chi-Rho handles. Nash-Williams thought the St. Dogmaels type "suggestive of a portable cross or fan".<sup>195</sup> An encircled cross of arcs at Caherlehillan,

County Kerry (fig. 14e) has an incised handle with the same sort of sharp projections on the sides that are found on the Raasay Chi-Rhos.<sup>196</sup> Another at Kilronan in Galway stands on a "short stem and base line".<sup>197</sup> A cross of arcs with sunken arms inside an incised ring has "a figure like an upright spear or arrow" beneath it and may be a later addition to an ogham stone from Aglish, Kerry.<sup>198</sup> An encircled cross of arcs with a handle is carved on a saddle quern from Inishtrahull Island, Donegal (fig. 14f).<sup>199</sup> A cross of arcs inside a double incised ring with a long broad shaft on an ogham pillar on Church Island in County Kerry was identified as a flabellum by Professor O'Kelly and Francoise Henry.<sup>200</sup> Its cross of arcs is of a later, developed type with a circle at the centre and four circular armpits and its ogham inscription is later still.<sup>201</sup> The encircled crosses of arcs on the Reask pillar, three slabs on Inishkea North and one on Inishkea South sit atop nests of spirals and peltas, each bisected by the vertical line of a stem or handle (fig. 13).<sup>202</sup>

Crosses and Chi-Rho monograms with pedestals, stems or handles, such as Knockane, Cloonlaur and Inis Cealtra, may reflect early forms of portable or processional crosses used in Ireland. If Chi-Rho monograms drawn inside rectilinear or circular frames and provided with handles illustrate contemporary flabella or imitate flabella depicted in imported manuscripts, the projections on the sides of the shafts of the Raasay Chi-Rhos, the Caherlehillan cross of arcs and the two Welsh examples at St. Dogmaels suggest decorated knops.

The PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn contains the elements found in the West Highland examples, an encircled cross of arcs and a pedestal. The Iona LAPIS ECHODI Chi-Rho is a compass-drawn cross of arcs but is not encircled and has no pedestal. The Rum and Daltote crosses are encircled and have handles or pedestals but are not Chi-Rhos.

The stems of the Chi-Rho in the Eilean Mór cave, the cross of arcs on the Kilmory pillar in Rum and the Daltote and Kilmaha crosses are all variations of the type which may have been established by the PETRI APVSTOLI stone. The inscription on the LAPIS ECHODI stone at Iona has been dated epigraphically to the seventh century. The Pictish symbols on the slab bearing one of the two Raasay Chi-Rhos are typologically late, suggesting a date in the late seventh or early eighth century. J. J. Galbraith's sixth-century date for the Raasay Chi-Rhos depends solely on the dedication of the nearby church to Moluag of Lismore,<sup>203</sup> but the dedication may instead reflect the late seventh-century activities of Maelrubai of Applecross, which faces Raasay's eastern shore. Moluag was a student of Comgall of Bangor, according to the Life of St. Malachy by Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>204</sup> The connexion between Applecross and Bangor is discussed in the previous chapter. The Eilean Mór Chi-Rho monogram introduces a new element, the positive contrast of the light on the "petals", the interspaces between the arms taking solid form in false relief, against the shadows in the negative sunken arms of the cross. Dr. Stevenson has recently discussed the analogous ambiguity of crosses appearing in the negative spaces created by interlace patterns in Insular manuscripts, beginning with the Book of Durrow in the seventh century, and has now identified the cross that emerges, "as it were in negative", from the interlace panel at the centre of the roof-tree on the Monymusk Reliquary, an object whose possibly secondary animal ornament Stevenson would date no later than the first half of the eighth century.<sup>205</sup> The Eilean Mór Chi-Rho probably belongs to the late seventh or early eighth century. The arms of the Daltote cross are also excised. Interest in the contrast between positive and negative had begun to wane by the time the Kilmory pillar-stone in Rum was carved. The arms of its cross of arcs are only lightly excised and the false relief of the



interspaces between the arms is insufficient to cast any but the merest of shadows. It is unlikely to be earlier than the eighth century. The expanded bases of the Eilean Mór, Rum and Whithorn Chi-Rhos suggest portable crosses placed on altars but the handles of the Raasay monograms and the Kilmaha and Daltote crosses would seem to have been designed to be carried.

Crosses of arcs in circles without shafts or handles have also been found west of Druimalban on Muck<sup>206</sup> and in Knapdale at Dunans (pl 13, now at Kilmory Knap) and on a pillar stone in the Cladh a' Bhile burial ground on the Ellary estate,<sup>207</sup> which has an excellent marigold or hexafoil on the opposite side. Encircled Welsh crosses of arcs or Maltese crosses without handles are rather more developed than the West Highland examples. A Maltese cross in a circle with a central roundel at Laleston and a Maltese cross in false relief on a damaged pillar stone at Merthyr Mawr, both in Glamorgan, may be as late as the eleventh or twelfth century,<sup>208</sup> although two in Pembrokeshire, one on a pillar stone at Capel Colman, the other on a slab at St. Dogmaels, may have been carved between the seventh and ninth centuries.<sup>209</sup> The type is common in Ireland, particularly in the west, where it is found in Kerry on two pillar stones at Faha,<sup>210</sup> a slab at Ballywiheen<sup>211</sup> and a stone at Tivoria;<sup>212</sup> in Donegal at Cloghan near Glencolumbkille<sup>213</sup> and on a later slab in the Killaghtee churchyard which also features a triquetra;<sup>214</sup> and in Mayo on a slab at Tarmon,<sup>215</sup> a pillar stone at Cloonlaur, another at Dommakeon and on the back of an erect slab on the island of Duvillaun More, which has a Crucifixion scene incised on the front and is unlikely to date before the eighth century.<sup>216</sup> Crosses of arcs and Maltese crosses with no stems or pedestals are also found in Ireland at Drumnacur in Antrim,<sup>217</sup> in Tipperary at Toureen Peakaun<sup>218</sup> and on a few burial slabs at Clonmacnoise.<sup>219</sup> The Gaelic

delight in the ambiguity of the design, the four interspaces or petals and the four limbs alternatively receding or taking pride of place according to the lighting conditions, is reflected in the West Highland examples, most notably the Eilean Mór Chi-Rho. The incised cross of arcs in a circle surmounted by an additional incised cross on a slab found in a grave on Papa Westray, Orkney may reflect Hebridean influence.<sup>220</sup>

The so-called St. Gobnet's stone at Ballyvourney in County Cork features a cross of arcs within a double incised circle on each of two sides.<sup>221</sup> A crozier-carrying figure shown in profile is cut above one of the two crosses of arcs. Henry thought the cross of arcs on the figure's side may have been a Chi-Rho, although the loop of the Rho is now obscured by flaking, and dated the stone to the second half of the seventh century, presumably because of the figure's similarity to the imago hominis of St. Matthew in the Book of Durrow, first noted in print by Mrs. Curle.<sup>222</sup> Professor Alcock, however, has observed a detail that eluded Curle and Henry: the Ballyvourney figure sports a Celtic ear-to-ear tonsure and the church in the south of Ireland conformed to Roman usage c. 632, giving a terminus post quem for the Ballyvourney stone.<sup>223</sup> Encircled crosses of arcs had therefore appeared in the south of Ireland by the first third of the seventh century. According to his Lives, Abbán moccu Corbmaic built a monastery at Ballyvourney and installed the virgin Gobnaid or Gobnet there,<sup>224</sup> suggesting a possible connexion between St. Gobnet's stone and the encircled cross of arcs Chi-Rho in the cave on Eilean Mór, which may also have belonged to the paruchia of Abbán, although the crosses of arcs on St. Gobnet's stone have no handles or pedestals.

The encircled cross of arcs was a common sculptural device in Ireland in the early medieval period, particularly in the west, from Kerry to Donegal. Irish Chi-Rhos, incised crosses and encircled crosses of arcs

are occasionally given elongated stems but they tend to be either extremely simple or highly ornate and few correspond closely to the West Highland handles of the Eilean Mór and Raasay Chi-Rhos or the crosses or arcs at Daltote, Kilmaha and Kilmory in Rum. There are few comparable Welsh or Cornish examples of Chi-Rhos or crosses of arcs in circular frames, although there is a vague similarity between the handle of the framed cross of arcs at Jeffrestown in Pembrokeshire and those at Eilean Mór, Rum and Daltote. The carving of crosses of arcs west of Druimalban may have been encouraged by the Irish practice but southwest Scotland is more likely to have been the immediate source.

The incised cross at Kilvickadownig in Kerry (fig. 14c) is of an early type, related to the monogrammatic Chi-Rho crosses at Arraglen and Knockane (figs. 12d-e). Its terminals and pedestal recall the similar cross found in the Cathach of St. Columba (fig. 14a) by the early seventh century. The curved base of the Kilvickadownig cross and its open ring suggest that it may have been a forerunner of the more developed, encircled crosses of arcs on pedestals seen on the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn, in the Eilean Mór cave and on the Kilmory pillar-stone in Rum.

In view of the probable dates of the Ballyvourney stone and the Cathach, we may conclude that crosses of arcs and crosses with extended shafts were available in Ireland in the early seventh century but the complete Whithorn type, an encircled cross of arcs Chi-Rho monogram on a pedestal with an expanded base, is only found in Ireland in florid form, on the probably later Slab 3 on Inishkea North. The intervening phase took place in a Gaelic context in Scottish Dál Riata, where the Whithorn type arrived intact, at least at Eilean Mór, and it would have been a simple matter to subtract the hook of the Rho and reduce the whole to a cross of arcs on a handle, as at Kilmory or Daltote, or

leave the handle out altogether, as on the Iona LAPIS ECHODI stone. Hebridean and West Highland Chi-Rhos and crosses of arcs are far more likely to have depended on Whithorn than on an Irish source.<sup>225</sup> The typologically early Irish incised crosses and Chi-Rhos at Kilvickadownig, Knockane and Arraglen gave way to the encircled crosses of arcs with elaborate handles at Inishkea North and South and Reask, almost without the intervening phase represented by the PETRI APVSTOLI stone. The Inishtrahull and Caherlehillan crosses of arcs on handles are exceptions (figs. 14e-f) and may reflect Scottish influence, either from Galloway or the Hebrides. Otherwise, the influence of Galloway in Ireland was of an earlier type, the stemless Kirkmadrine monograms seen at Drumaqueran in Antrim (figs. 12a-c).

#### Dál Riata and Southwest Scotland

Other than Adomnán, who recounts that the first monk to die at Iona was a Briton and that Columba was sent an emissary by Riderch Hen, king of Strathclyde, there is little evidence for regular contact between Dál Riata and the British kingdoms of southwest Scotland.<sup>226</sup> Báetán mac Cairill, king of the Dál Fiatach of Ulster, whose position as king of the Ulaid confederation, including Dál Riata, was undermined by the Convention of Druim Cett, evicted the "foreigners" from the Isle of Man in 577, although the Dál Fiatach withdrew from Man in the second year after Báetán's death, in 582 or 583.<sup>227</sup> Entries for 582 and 583 in the Annals of Ulster, which may describe the same event, record battles won in Man by the Dalriadic king Aedán mac Gabráin.<sup>228</sup> Barnerman suggests that the Dalriadic victory may have been responsible for the withdrawal of the Dál Fiatach and Dr. Molly Miller further suggests that the "foreigners" expelled by Báetán may have been a Brittonic dynasty restored by Aedán, whose mother and at least one of his wives were

apparently British, and who had a son or grandson with the British name of Artúr.<sup>229</sup> Bede's account of Aedán's defeat by Aethelfrith of Northumbria at Degsastan c. 603 seems to mean that Aedán went to war against Northumbria to relieve Anglo-Saxon pressure on the Britons,<sup>230</sup> but Professor Jackson and Dr. Bannerman have called attention to later Welsh sources that refer to Dalriadic raids under Aedán against Riderch in Dumbarton and the Britons of Strathclyde and Galloway, which give Aedán the nickname of fradawc or bradawc, the "wily" or "treacherous", although Aedán's familial connexions continue to suggest to Bannerman that Aedán "had close contact with the Britons at some time in his life".<sup>231</sup> Domnall Brecc, the Dalriadic king whose reign proved disastrous for his kingdom, was defeated and killed at the battle of Strathcarron by Ywain son of Beli son of Neithon, the king of the Strathclyde Britons, c. 642, an event celebrated in an interpolation in the Gododdin poem.<sup>232</sup> Entries in the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach for 678 record a slaughter of the Cenél Loairn in Tíree and Tigernach adds that it was a British victory over Ferchar Fota of the Cenél Loairn,<sup>233</sup> but Dr. Marjorie Anderson believes that the extra details in Tigernach are the result of a "manifest dislocation".<sup>234</sup> There seems to have been peace thereafter between Dál Riata and the Britons until the second decade of the eighth century, when British defeats by Dál Riata are entered in the annals in 711 and 717.<sup>235</sup>

Regardless of the political situation, relations between the British church in southwest Scotland and Iona are likely to have been cordial in the seventh century, especially after the Synod of Whitby. There is no way of knowing when Strathclyde conformed to Roman usage, but the Britons were generally even more reluctant to conform than the Gaels. The Welsh church did not succumb until 768 and the Celtic tonsure was worn at the Breton monastery of Landevenec until 818.<sup>236</sup> Bede's

silence about the church west of the Pennines, except for the area around Carlisle, suggests to Dr. Smyth "the startling possibility that the region from the Wirral to the Solway may have been in British hands almost up to Bede's own day", although Whithorn was the seat of an Anglo-Saxon bishop in Bede's lifetime.<sup>237</sup> The British church in south-west Scotland probably remained recalcitrant until the period of Bede's adulthood, when Iona itself finally accepted Roman jurisdiction. Iona and Whithorn may well have seen each other as allies from the Synod of Whitby until the early eighth century, the period when the Chi-Rho monogram, in the form of a cross of arcs in a circular frame, is most likely to have been transmitted from Whithorn to the West Highlands and Islands, complete with a handle of the type incised on the PETRI APVSTOLI stone. British warriors are reported to have taken part in four battles in Ireland listed in the Annals of Ulster between 682 and 709 and Dr. Smyth suggests the possibility that the Britons may have been refugees from the collapsed kingdom of Rheged.<sup>238</sup> If so, British stonecarvers from Rheged might have sought employment elsewhere, possibly in Dál Riata, during the same period.

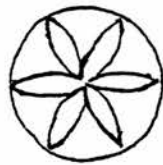
#### Hexafoils or Marigolds

The hexafoil or marigold pattern is another Early Christian device found in the West Highlands and Islands, where the motif enjoyed a particularly long life. It is carved on a fragment of a cross arm on Iona, dating to the eleventh or twelfth century, and on an architectural fragment from Saddell Abbey in Kintyre, which was built in the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>239</sup> It is also found on two early-eighteenth-century Campbell burial slabs in the Kilmartin churchyard in Mid-Argyll.<sup>240</sup> Early medieval examples are provided by upright slabs at Cladh a' Bhile and Kilberry in Knapdale, a fragment from Cladh a' Bhile,

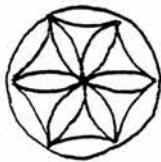


another stone found on the Ellary estate, and two hexafoils in caves, one on Eilean Mór and the other in Kintyre.

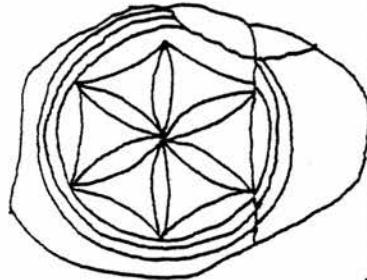
The finest West Highland marigold is carved on a slab in the Cladh a' Bhile burial ground on the Ellary estate in Knapdale, a site as difficult of access now as it was when described over a century ago by Capt. White and William Galloway.<sup>241</sup> Cladh a' Bhile No. 1, to use Galloway's numbering system, features an encircled cross of arcs on the side opposite the marigold and is the largest slab at Cladh a' Bhile. A Maltese cross is carved below the hexafoil. Within an outer ring in false relief, the six pointed leaves of the ornate marigold are separated by six "trumpet-shaped flowers" whose narrow points are fixed at the centre of the design and expand into C-scrolls at their wide outer ends (pl. 14, fig. 15c).<sup>242</sup> Smaller incised C-scrolls turned inwards are fitted between the terminals of the "trumpet-shaped flowers" and recall C-shaped insets in enamelled Merovingian buckles, such as the one from Amiens in the British Museum, whose production Dr. Edward James would place in the Garonne region.<sup>243</sup> Incised spiral and scroll designs between the arms of the Maltese cross are still discernible but are too weathered to be clearly decipherable. The excised depressions of the six leaves of the hexafoil, the six "trumpet-shaped flowers" between the marigold leaves and the four arms of the Maltese cross are all faceted in the chip-carving technique. Liam de Paor has drawn a distinction between Irish metalwork decorated with engraving, *champlevé* enamel and C-scrolls set in fields of enamel or glass studs and later Irish metalwork in which chip-carved ornament predominates.<sup>244</sup> Dr. James would derive the engraving technique seen, for example in the dotted backgrounds on the Monymusk Reliquary and the Ardagh Chalice, from Aquitaine.<sup>245</sup> The C-scrolls between the terminals of the "trumpet-shaped flowers" and the worn incised designs that serve as the background



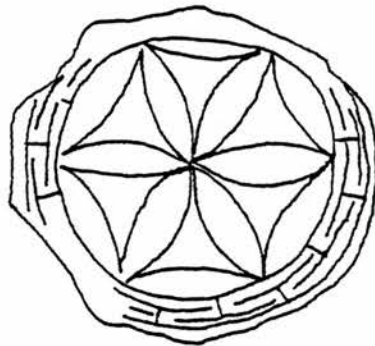
(a) TYPE A.



(b) TYPE B.

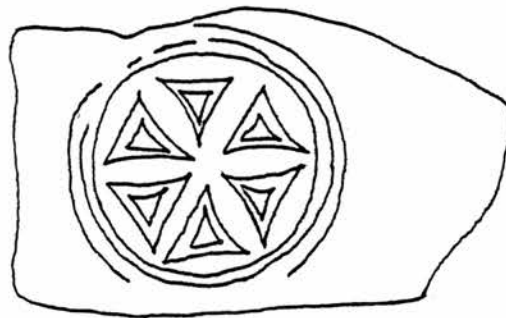


(d) GAILEN PRIORITY A77-66  
(KENDRICK: MBSA fig II.1)



(c) CLADH A' BHILLE, No 1.  
(PSAS: II, pl. 2, No 1)  
(WHITE: 1975, pl. XIV.1).

(f) ST CIARAN'S CAVE.  
(RECHMS: 1971.)

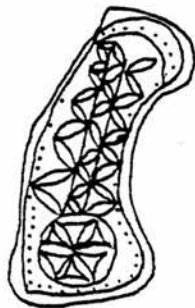


(e) GAILEN PRIORITY A173.  
(KENDRICK: MBSA, pl. VI.2.)

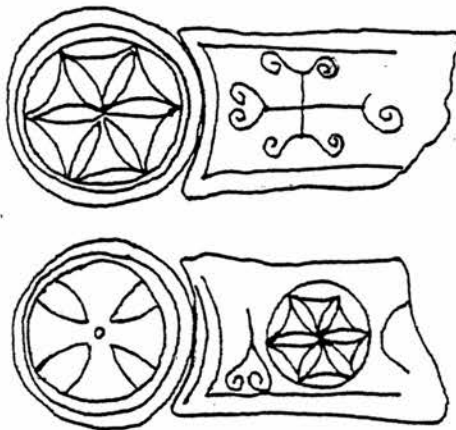


(g) CLADH A' BHILLE No 10  
(PSAS: 12, pl. IV.10)

(h) DEVAL BROOCH, BALLINDERRY  
CRATHOG, No 2.  
(KILBRIDE-JONES: 1980 fig 40-88).



(i) MILLPORT GREAT CUMBRAE.  
(PSAS: II, pl. XIV.1-2).



of the Maltese cross on Cladh a' Bhile No. 1 were motifs readily available to Irish metalworkers by the end of the seventh century at the latest, but chip-carving was not extensively used in Irish metalwork before the eighth century. The underside of the base of the Ardagh chalice features both cast chip-carving and C-scrolls set in glass studs.<sup>246</sup> Cladh a' Bhile No. 1 reflects metalwork influence and represents a transitional phase roughly datable to c. 700. The sharply faceted hexafoil on an upright slab at Kilberry in Knapdale (pl. 15)<sup>247</sup> lacks the additional incised designs seen on Cladh a' Bhile No. 1. Cladh a' Bhile is near the northern shore of Loch Caolisport, which separates north and south Knapdale. Kilberry, less than five miles to the south by sea, overlooks the Sound of Jura on the west side of south Knapdale. The Kilberry stone may well be later than, and influenced by Cladh a' Bhile No. 1.

Two other examples of hexafoils have also been found on the Ellary estate. A fragment at Cladh a' Bhile, No. 10 (fig. 15g), seems to have represented the design by means of "elliptical sinkings" when complete.<sup>248</sup> An encompassing circle around the hexafoil is suggested by similar extensions between the outer points of the marigold leaves. Another stone found on the estate depicts a hexafoil composed of incised lines within an incised circle.<sup>249</sup>

One of the two West Highland marigolds found in caves is simple, the other quite accomplished. The pock-marks made to describe the six branches and the outer circle of the hexafoil in the Eilean Mòr cave are still visible.<sup>250</sup> The hexafoil incised on a boulder in St. Ciaran's Cave in Kintyre is much more complex (fig. 15f).<sup>251</sup> Its form recalls that of Cladh a' Bhile No. 1: the pointed ends of the six marigold leaves are connected by arcs, creating "trumpet-shaped flowers" in the interspaces. The design is contained within a circular border decorated

with a repeated T-fret pattern of a type common from about the eighth century onwards.<sup>252</sup>

### The Marigold Motif in Britain and Ireland

In his study of the lamp from Ballinderry Crannog No. 1, Dr. Hugh O'Neill Hencken distinguished three types of marigold patterns, each drawn with a compass without changing its radius.<sup>253</sup> Type A (fig. 15a) shows the six marigold leaves with convex sides and pointed ends. In Type B (fig. 15b), arcs connect the outer points of the leaves. Type C is a repeated, overlapping version of Type B, not found in the West Highlands and Islands. Type A is represented by the Eilean Mór example, the Ellary stone and Cladh a' Bhile No. 10. The more developed Type B occurs in chip-carved form at Kilberry and on Cladh a' Bhile No. 1. Hexafoils were known in Roman Britain and are found on altars from Birrens, Risingham, Lincoln and elsewhere, as well as on the Roman silver from the Traprain Law hoard.<sup>254</sup>

The form of marigolds used in a Christian context is indistinguishable from that of pre-Christian examples but it is generally assumed that the relationship between the two is fortuitous and that the Christian patterns are approximations of the Constantinian Chi-Rho.<sup>255</sup> The motif entered the repertoire of Christian Celtic enamellers in Britain in the fifth or sixth century and in Ireland by the seventh century at the latest. Type B is found on the escutcheons of the Baginton hanging-bowl and another in the Dover Museum, and hexagonal variants of Type A are found in Ireland on latchets from Newry, County Down and in the Belfast Museum.<sup>256</sup> Type B is also found on a Newry latchet and on two zoomorphic penannular brooches of exceptionally high quality, the great Ballinderry Crannog No. 2 brooch (fig. 15h) and another in the National Museum in Dublin.<sup>257</sup> The earliest example in the West

Highlands and Islands is probably the simplest, the pock-marked marigold in the Eilean Mór cave.

Carved examples of hexafoils are relatively rare in Britain and Ireland. Types A and B are both found at Gallen Priory in County Offaly (figs. 15d-e), some of the Type B examples with faceted, sunken interspaces in the manner of Cladh a' Bhile No. 1.<sup>258</sup> The intricate Type C is carved on slab fragments at Clonmacnoise and Nendrum.<sup>259</sup> An antler motif-piece from a sandhills settlement at Cloghastuckan in the Dooley townland in Donegal displays Type A marigolds, running spirals and rows of lozenges set in rectangular panels and carved in the chip-carving technique in imitation of metalwork, suggesting a late seventh-century date at the earliest.<sup>260</sup> Type B is found on two stones at Maughold in the Isle of Man, including the late seventh century IRNEIT stone (fig. 14i), and another which features a marigold and an incised cross of arcs.<sup>261</sup> A disc-headed slab at Millport, Great Cumbrae had a Maltese cross on the head above a Type B marigold on one side and another Type B marigold on the head on the other side, above an incised cross with incised C-scrolls at the head and foot and unusual spiral terminals on the side-arms (fig. 15i). Mrs. Curle related it to Cladh a' Bhile No. 1, which also pairs a hexafoil with a Maltese cross, and to disc-headed monuments in Cornwall, and noted that the geographical position of the Cumbraes permitted easy access to British influence from Strathclyde and Gaelic influence from Dál Riata.<sup>262</sup> A motif somewhat analogous to a six-branched hexafoil is also found in Scotland on the Skeith Stone in Fife, but with eight arms it is not a true hexafoil.<sup>263</sup> A Type A marigold is found in a Pictish context, however, on the base of silver bowl No. 3 from the St. Ninian's Isle Treasure.<sup>264</sup>

Henry saw the influence of Merovingian sarcophagi on the use of the marigold motif in Irish sculpture.<sup>265</sup> The decoration of the

sarcophagus of bishop Boetius at Venasque includes six-petalled rosettes in addition to the reversed Alpha and Omega beneath the arms of a jewelled cross. A Merovingian sarcophagus found at Nîmes features marigolds and an encircled cross with expanded arms.<sup>266</sup> The hexafoil was a common motif throughout the Roman world but Dr. James has found that it is especially concentrated on sculpture in the region of the upper Garonne.<sup>267</sup> The possibility of a non-Gaulish Mediterranean source is demonstrated by the conventional six-armed hexafoil rosettes on the frontispiece of the Orosius Chronicon MS D.23.sup. in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, a manuscript known to have been in Bobbio in the fifteenth century, which most probably was made by Irish scribes at Bobbio in the seventh century.<sup>268</sup> A foliate version of the marigold was carved on the tomb slab at Bobbio of the eighth-century Irish bishop Cumian.<sup>269</sup> The metalwork evidence, however, strongly suggests that hexafoils were already known in the British Isles when Columbanus founded Bobbio in Italy in Luxeuil in Gaul. Dalriadic marigolds need not have depended upon a manuscript source but that does not preclude the possibility of Merovingian influence.

#### Chi-Rhos, Marigolds and the Gaulish Connexion

The presence of the Chi-Rho monogram, crosses of arcs and marigold patterns in the West Highlands and Islands in the early medieval period may be the result of Gaulish influence, although Dál Riata could have received the motifs second-hand from elsewhere. The monogrammatic Chi-Rho, a cross with a hook on the top arm to indicate the Rho, was apparently in use in southwest Gaul by the second half of the fifth century, the period when the motif began to make its way to Kirkmadrine.<sup>270</sup> The Chi-Rho monogram is common on the reverse of Merovingian coins from the late sixth to the eighth centuries.<sup>271</sup>



Marigolds appear frequently on Merovingian sarcophagi in southwest Gaul and on Aquitanian buckles.<sup>272</sup> Two Type B marigolds, similar to those at Millport, Maughold and on Cladh a' Bhile No. 1, are engraved on a buckle from Tabariane (Ariège), an example of a buckle type that originated in the valley of the Garonne.<sup>273</sup>

Pottery provides the least subjective archaeological evidence for contact between western Gaul and the British Isles. Petrological study of E ware sherds found in the British Isles has led Professor Thomas to suggest that E ware was exported from the Atlantic coast of Aquitaine from the fifth to the seventh century, the fifth century date confirmed by radiocarbon dates from the Mote of Mark, Armagh and Craig Phadrig, sites where E ware has been found.<sup>274</sup> E ware has also been discovered in Skye, Kintyre and at Dunadd, as well as at Dunollie, where Alcock's excavations have produced no evidence for occupation earlier than the late seventh century.<sup>275</sup> Wine is likely to have been one of the commodities regularly imported from Gaul, either in pottery or wooden vessels, and Thomas points out that Adomnán was apparently quite familiar with it when he remarked that Columba's prophecies were "far more numerous" than the droplets that dripped occasionally "through the cracks of a vessel filled with new strongly-fermenting wine".<sup>276</sup>

Adomnán and the Vita Columbani by Jonas of Bobbio both imply regular maritime commerce between western Gaul and the Gaels of Ireland and Dál Riata, as James has noted.<sup>277</sup> Columbanus, on his way to Ireland, boarded a ship at Nantes quae Scottorum commercia uexerat.<sup>278</sup> According to Adomnán, Columba predicted that his vision of a city burned in Italy would be confirmed by sailors who would come from Gaul. Their ship duly arrived, possibly at Crinan near Dunadd, and the vision was confirmed. It is significant that Adomnán found nothing remarkable in the fact that Columba's interpreter on that occasion, the Irish monk

Lugbe moccu-Min, who may also have been able to speak the P-Celtic Cumbric of Strathclyde, was able to converse with the sailors from Gaul.<sup>279</sup>

Chi-Rho monograms and crosses of arcs in the West Highlands and Islands may have depended heavily on the influence of Whithorn. Hexafoils may have reached the same area by way of Ireland. The tridents in the Mull caves, the Gigha "Holy Stone", the E ware sherds from Kintyre, Dunadd, Dunollie, and Skye, and the Gaulish trade with Dál Riata implied by Adomnán suggest, however, that it was possible for some Christian motifs to travel directly from Merovingian Gaul to the West Highlands and Islands. One can only wonder, with Professor Thomas, what else was imported from Gaul besides pottery.<sup>280</sup>

#### Leac an Duine Choir (pl. 16)

A carved recumbent slab, called Leac an Duine Choir, or "Stone of the Just Man", at the Barrackan farm on the west side of the Craignish peninsula, exhibits a decorative feature found nowhere else in the West Highlands and Islands. The design in the centre of the carved side of the leac looks like "two Bs back to back with a curving ring originating from the spine of one to surround both", as Marion Campbell of Kilberry and Mary Sandeman have described it.<sup>281</sup> The design is carved in false relief and the incised dividing line between the two Bs is extended on one end to provide the shaft of an incised cross. Another cross is also incised on the other side of the central design. Mr. Ronald W. B. Morris regards the central design of Leac an Duine Choir as prehistoric but describes it as "unique".<sup>282</sup> Campbell and Sandeman apparently believe that the crosses are early medieval, but compare the central figure to a carving in the gallery of the Cairn T tumulus at

Lough Crew, County Meath, although none of the overlapping lobes of the Lough Crew carving are attached in pairs to anything like the Barrackan Bs.<sup>283</sup>

The central figure and the crosses of Leac an Duine Choir are all more likely to date to the early medieval period. The Barrackan Bs recall the three D-shaped loops stacked vertically on the right side of fol. 3v of the seventh century Durham Gospel fragment A.II.10.<sup>284</sup> Two D-shaped figures are left in false relief by the incised lines of each of the two Barrackan Bs, although it must be admitted that the comparison is inexact. Peltas are created between the outer edges of the Bs and the incised ring which surrounds the whole design. Instead of terminating in the customary spirals, the peltas are enclosed by the straight lines of the backs of the two Bs. The Barrackan design is probably a variation of the peltas found in Irish sculpture, such as those on the Kilshannig Chi-Rho or the Reask pillar, and is unlikely to have been carved before the seventh century A.D.

#### Linear and Outline Incised Crosses

Linear crosses consisting of two incised lines intersecting at right angles and crosses incised in outline, carved on slabs, pillars and living rock with little or no additional decoration, constitute the largest, most difficult and intractable category of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban. Few of them are closely datable. Some are found on sites about which little else is known, where their presence is taken as evidence of early Christian activity, which in turn is used to date the crosses. The formlessness of many examples frustrates the emergence of a typological sequence and makes comparisons seem futile, but the minimal decoration accorded crosses potent or those with bifid or otherwise expanded terminals, their distribution and the historical

associations of some of their sites permit a few general observations and some tentative conclusions. Some limits are imposed on their possible dates by the form of cross employed, the historical and archaeological information available for some sites where they are found, and by local tradition.

### The Stones and Their Sites

The figures of simple crosses were incised on pillar stones of varying heights, upright and recumbent burial markers, boulders and cave walls. Cross-marked pillar stones and boulders may have served as tombstones or defined the boundaries of monastic precincts. Crosses incised on cave walls are probably the relics of eremitic activity.

Crosses are incised on boulders in Tiree, North Uist, Mid-Argyll and Iona. One of the two cross-inscribed boulders from Cladh Beag, Tiree is now lost but was apparently set upright.<sup>285</sup> The other is now near the modern cemetery at Kirkapoll (fig. 17a).<sup>286</sup> Cladh in Scottish place names is thought to indicate an early cemetery.<sup>287</sup>

Thus the name of Cladh Beag suggests an ancient burial ground but no evidence for one is visible at the site.<sup>288</sup> Two cross-decorated boulders at Cearn a' Mhara, Tiree, one inside and the other outside the ruined St. Patrick's Chapel, may have served as burial or boundary markers (figs. 17b-c). The remains of an enclosure wall around the site suggest a small "cashel or monastery of the Early Christian period".<sup>289</sup> A cross incised on a boulder at the Kilbride farm near Turnalt in Mid-Argyll may have served as a boundary marker. Local tradition preserves the memory of an early monastery and the remains of a rectangular enclosure may be those of a medieval church.<sup>290</sup>

The only known ecclesiastical association of the huge Clach an t-Sagairt in North Uist (pl. 17) is the cross incised on its eastern side,<sup>291</sup>

but its proximity to the nearby Dun Rosail suggests, perhaps, that the stone had some pagan significance before its "conversion" to Christianity. The natural size and shape of a small "water-worn boulder" on Iona<sup>292</sup> made it easily adaptable as a cross-marked tombstone (fig. 21, no. 10).

Crosses are incised on natural rock formations in Tiree, North Uist and Mid-Argyll. Two near the ruined chapel at Kirkapoll, Tiree (figs. 17e-f) may have marked the boundaries of an early ecclesiastical site.<sup>293</sup> A fine cross with triangular terminals incised on a rock formation at Ard a' Mhorain on the coast of North Uist (pl. 18)<sup>294</sup> is beaten by the waves at high tide, perhaps in commemoration of a cleric lost at sea. The Ard a' Mhorain cross may be contemporary with the pre-Norse houses at the Udal, about a mile and a half to the southwest. A cross incised on an outcrop at Barnakill near the Crinan Canal may have been a boundary marker. An upright cross-inscribed slab, locally known as the "Monk's Cross" (fig. 18b) and now at Poltalloch, was found in the remains of a circular enclosure at Barnakill, locally thought to be an ancient graveyard.<sup>295</sup>

The contemplative devotions of anchorites are suggested by crosses carved on the walls of the two Mull caves (figs. 19-20) and St. Columba's Cave in Knapdale. The Nuns' Cave near Carsaig in Mull is thirty meters deep and twenty meters wide at the mouth. The Scoor Cave in Mull is about fifteen meters deep and four meters wide at the entrance. Both are roomy enough to allow several adults to stand upright inside them.<sup>296</sup> Three crosses are cut into the walls of the smaller St. Columba's Cave near Ellary in Knapdale, which also contains a drystone altar.<sup>297</sup> The many crosses cut in the walls of the King's Cave in Jura, however, may have been the result of the seventeenth century activities of Franciscan missionaries operating from Antrim.<sup>298</sup>

Undressed stones, often pointed or tapering towards one end and decorated with crosses, which were apparently intended to stand upright, are usually known as pillar stones. Two examples at a site once known as Cladh Mhuire near Calgary in Mull may indicate an early burial ground.<sup>299</sup> A broken cross-decorated pillar stone from Killundine in Morvern was about one and a half meters tall and could have been used as a burial or boundary marker (fig. 16a). Another at Killundine, about two thirds of a meter tall, was probably a tombstone (fig. 16b).<sup>300</sup> A stone of similar height with sunken crosses on two opposite faces now inside the ruined St. Patrick's Chapel at Cearn a' Mhara, Tiree (fig. 17d) may also have served as a burial marker.<sup>301</sup> A stone with an incised cross standing near the east shore of Loch Sween at Kilbride is across the road from a rectangular field said to be a burial ground, although there is no other evidence that the field was ever used as a cemetery.<sup>302</sup>

A large number of early medieval burial markers have been found in the West Highlands and Islands. Most of the Iona burial slabs were probably intended to lie recumbent, but at least two on Iona and several found elsewhere appear to have stood upright originally. A dressed slab at the barely identifiable Teampull Mhuir on the tidal island of Vallay, off the north coast of North Uist, bears incised crosses at opposite ends of one face.<sup>303</sup> It was used as the lintel over the doorway of a modern burial enclosure until 1904 and its shape suggests it could have been used for a similar purpose at a much earlier period, but it, too, may originally have been a burial marker. Examples of undressed cross-marked stones which appear to have been intended to stand upright have been found at Kilkenneth in Tiree,<sup>304</sup> the Cladh a' Bhile and Achadh na Cille burial grounds in Knapdale,<sup>305</sup> at Kilnaish in south Knapdale,<sup>306</sup> at Cladh Manach on the island of Boreray, north of North Uist, on Pabbay,



south of Barra, and at Elgoll in Skye.<sup>307</sup> A slab with a sunken cross on North Rona may have been used as an upright or recumbent burial marker.<sup>308</sup> The apparent contemporaneity of the crosses cut on two opposite sides of two stones on Iona (fig. 21, nos. 8 and 11) seems to indicate that they originally stood upright.<sup>309</sup> A stone carved with crosses potent on two opposite sides, now at Inverneill House in Knapdale, has a pointed foot (plate 20a). Capt. White thought it might have come from Achadh na Cille when he drew it over a century ago, but another tradition connects it with Eilean Mór, where an upright burial marker features quite similar decoration (pl. 20b).<sup>310</sup> A thin slab with a pointed foot, found in 1882 below the socket-stone of the Kildalton cross in Islay, bears an incised outline cross and may have stood upright originally.<sup>311</sup> Three upright burial markers with incised crosses have also been found on Eileach an Naoimh.<sup>312</sup> The crosses scratched with a sharp point on two upright slabs associated with a Viking burial at Kiloran Bay in Colonsay have been dated to the second half of the ninth century on the basis of coins found at the site.<sup>313</sup> In addition to the recumbent grave slabs on Iona, other examples now lost have been recorded at Cladh Beag, Tiree,<sup>314</sup> Kilmun in Cowal,<sup>315</sup> and at the site of Cille Mhuire at Houghary in North Uist.<sup>316</sup> Cross-decorated stones found at Hirt in St. Kilda,<sup>317</sup> St. Keith's Chapel on the island of Taransay, west of Harris,<sup>318</sup> and two fragments from St. Donnan's church in Eigg (pl. 12) were probably designed as recumbent burial slabs. One slab at Iona was originally recumbent, with "two conjoined Latin crosses, the upper one apparently having two transoms" (fig. 23, no. 18). At a later date, perhaps because one corner of the slab had broken off, it had a sunken cross carved on both sides and was set upright.<sup>319</sup> Erect pillar stones featuring incised crosses may have been used as burial markers before

recumbent slabs began to be used for the same purpose, but the use of pillar stones apparently continued after the introduction of recumbent slabs.

### The Crosses and Their Dating

Professor Thomas has proposed three probable stages in the development of Early Christian stone memorials in Celtic Britain and Ireland.<sup>320</sup> Late Roman Christian incised funerary monuments, which probably influenced the earliest Irish ogham stones in Wales and Ireland, gave way in the second half of the fifth century to rude pillar stone, such as the LATINUS stone at Whithorn, with Latin inscriptions.<sup>321</sup> By the late fifth or early sixth century, a second stage was initiated when inscriptions began to be prefaced by Chi-Rho monograms, as on the memorials at Kirkmadrine of FLORENTIUS and VIVENTIUS ET MAVORIUS. The second stage was continued in the sixth century by inscriptions headed by a cross, rather than a Chi-Rho.<sup>322</sup> Thomas would not date the third stage, in which simple crosses alone were carved on pillars, slabs and boulders, before the late sixth century.<sup>323</sup> Dr. Ann Hamlin would not date the third stage in Ireland before the seventh century.<sup>324</sup> Stones bearing inscriptions prefaced by a cross continued in use after uninscribed cross-marked stones made their first appearance.

Plain incised crosses, distinct from Chi-Rho monograms, first appear in a Christian context in the British Isles at the beginning of inscriptions datable to the sixth century. An equal-armed cross in a circle is carved above the mid-sixth-century Castel Dwyran VOTEPORIGIS PROTICTORIS inscription.<sup>325</sup> Encircled equal-armed crosses probably resulted from the subtraction of the loop of the Rho from encircled Chi-Rho monograms of the type found at Kirkmadrine and Drumaqueran in Antrim. The more technically advanced encircled, equal-armed outline

crosses on a slab in the Iona Abbey museum (fig. 23, no. 24), on a pillar stone at Kilmory Knap (pl. 19, left) and on Cladh a' Bhile No. 2<sup>326</sup> are more likely to date to the seventh or eighth century at the earliest, but the simpler incised encircled cross on another slab in the Iona Abbey museum (fig. 21, no. 6) may be as early as the late sixth or early seventh century. The inscription on the CONINIE stone from Manowater, Peebles, is prefaced by a small cross and has been dated by Jackson to the early sixth and by Thomas to the late sixth century.<sup>327</sup> The inscription on the Inchagoil stone in Galway, which includes the sixth-century archaic patronymic form MACCI, is preceded by two crosses with bifid terminals.<sup>328</sup> The only inscribed stone with an incised cross with bifid terminals in the West Highlands and Islands, dated epigraphically by Jackson to the ninth century, came from Iona and is now at Inverary Castle (fig. 22, no. 14).<sup>329</sup> Other than it and the LAPIS ECHODI stone, all other early medieval Iona inscribed stones feature ringed crosses and few of them are datable before the ninth century.<sup>330</sup> The worn inscription on the cross-marked Barnakill "Monk's Cross" slab (fig. 18b), now at Poltalloch, is headed by a deeply incised or sunken cross with expanded terminals and probably dates to the seventh century.<sup>331</sup> Inscriptions cannot be used to date most early medieval cross-marked stones in the West Highlands and Islands because so few of them are inscribed. No inscribed cross-marked stone west of Druimalban is datable before the seventh century. Some uninscribed pillar stones or slabs bearing incised crosses might, however, be a bit earlier.

The presence of incised crosses on stones in Strathfillan, Glendochart and Strathearn, an area associated with the early sixth century Faelán amlabar, St. Fillan the Dumb, suggests the possibility that some incised crosses in Scotland might be earlier than the late sixth century. Three plain crosses are incised on a slab now in the

modern graveyard at St. Fillan's Chapel in Strathfillan.<sup>332</sup> A pillar stone in the burial ground of the Macnabs of Inishewan at Suie, near Luib in Glendochart, bears an equal-armed incised cross on one face and an incised cross with a long shaft on the opposite face.<sup>333</sup> Crosses are incised on the south and east sides of a boulder near St. Blane's Chapel, not far from Lochearnhead.<sup>334</sup> The name of St. Blane's Chapel suggests a British ecclesiastical mission in the region, but few would now agree with Dr. W. Douglas Simpson that saints' dedications necessarily refer to foundations made by the saints themselves.<sup>335</sup> The name of St. Fillan's Chapel can no more be used to assign an early sixth-century date to its cross-marked slab than the name of St. Blane's Chapel can be taken as evidence of a seventh-century date for the cross-marked boulder there.<sup>336</sup> The cross-marked stones in Strathfillan, Glendochart and Strathearn are more likely to represent Dalriadic churchmen active among the Picts in the area between the late sixth and early eighth centuries, when king Nechtan conformed to Rome, than the possibly early sixth century mission of Faelán amlabar.

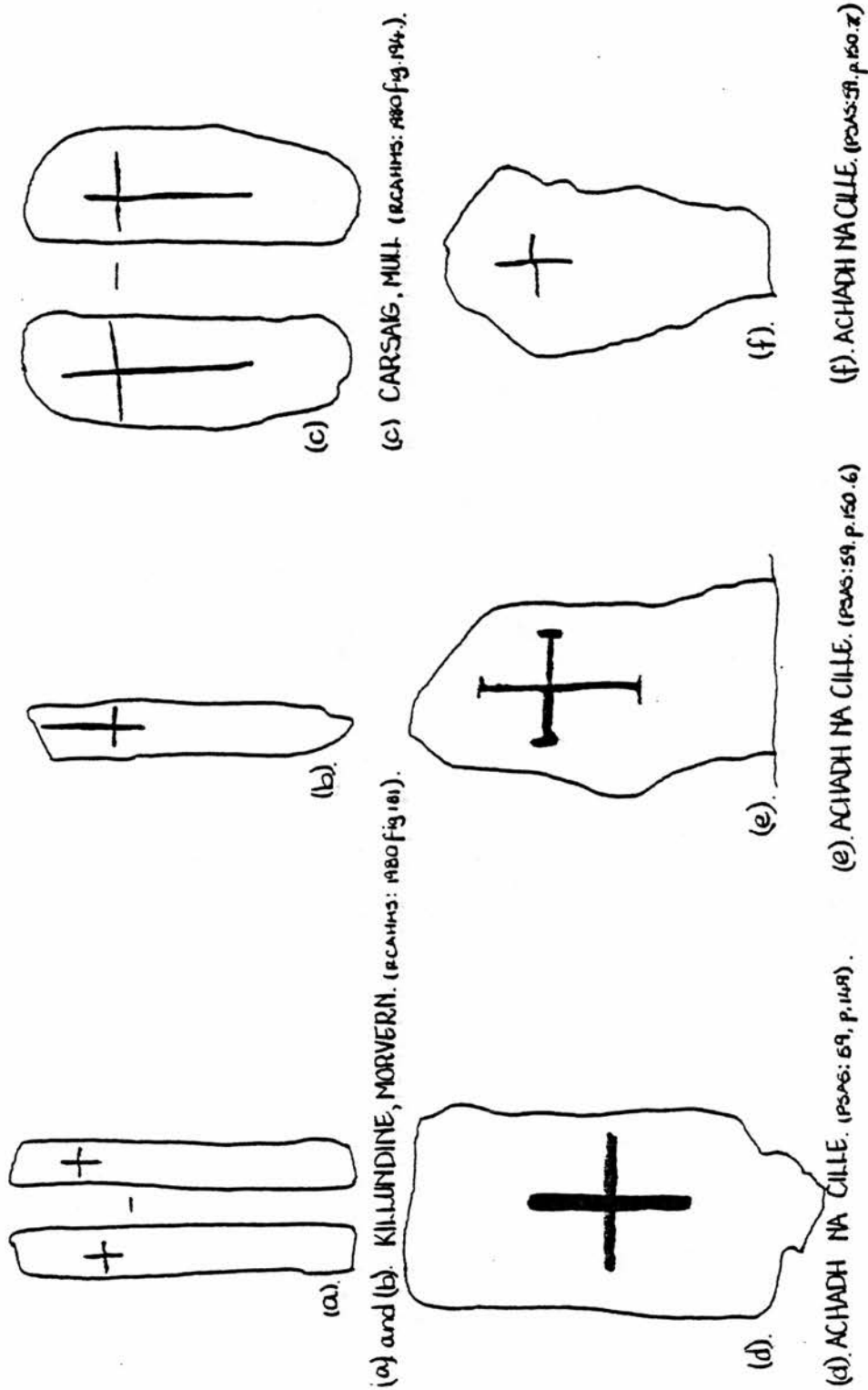
Two slabs at Luss, on the western shore of Loch Lomond in Dumbartonshire, display incised crosses, one with punched dots in the quadrants.<sup>337</sup> Luss is equidistant from Cowal and Dumbarton and the Luss slabs could reflect ecclesiastical missions by either the Britons of Strathclyde or the Gaels of Argyll. Dál Riata may have enjoyed periodic good relations with Strathclyde from the mid-sixth to the early eighth century, but it is unlikely that there was much difference in type between the uninscribed cross-marked stones incised by the Britons of southern Scotland and those carved by the Scots of Dál Riata in the late sixth and seventh centuries. Simple incised crosses are not often found in Anglo-Saxon areas and the plain incised cross slab at Ruthwell probably predates the Anglo-Saxon takeover of the area, as Raleigh Radford

rightly remarked, although his sixth or early seventh-century date was based on the then customary late seventh-century date for the Ruthwell cross.<sup>338</sup> A date between the late sixth and early eighth century for the Ruthwell incised cross slab might now be preferred. The punched dot terminals on an incised cross from the Hirscl, Coldstream, Berwickshire and those on the crosses on an upright slab on Eileach an Naoimh and a pillar stone at Stroove, Donegal,<sup>339</sup> demonstrate that similar types of crosses were incised by both Britons and Gaels. Southeast Scotland was under firm Anglian control by the mid-seventh century.<sup>340</sup> The Hirscl stone is unlikely to be much later. The Eileach an Naoimh stone is probably contemporary.

The earliest type of cross-marked stones in the West Highlands and Islands is represented by pillar stones with unringed incised crosses. Examples from Killundine in Morvern (fig. 16a) and Calgarry in Mull (fig. 18a) may be as early as the late sixth century.<sup>341</sup> All but one of the cross-marked stones in the burial ground at Achadh na Cille in Knapdale seem to have been upright slabs or pillar stones and the exception is probably a fragment of a once larger slab (fig. 16d).

The use of pillar stones, cross-marked, inscribed, or both, is assumed to precede that of recumbent slabs. The former seems to imitate the erection of standing stones in the Bronze Age, many of which were still in evidence when Christianity was introduced, as some still are today. The placement of small recumbent slabs over a grave was not, however, an indigenous practice but was imported, probably from Merovingian Gaul. Over a century ago, William Galloway advanced an historical argument for dating Dalriadic cross-marked pillar stones and upright slabs earlier than recumbent burial markers.<sup>342</sup> All of the cross-marked stones in the Cladh a' Bhile burial ground in Knapdale appear to have stood upright originally and Knapdale is likely to have

FIG. 16 EARLY INCISED CROSSES WEST OF DUMMALBAN





been Dalriadic territory before the Dál Riata expanded into Mull and the adjacent Iona. The death of Gabrán son of Domangart, progenitor of the Cenél nGabráin, is recorded c. 560 in the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach, along with a "flight" of the Scots from Bruide son of Maelchú, king of the Picts, although there is some confusion over which event occurred first.<sup>343</sup> Dr. Bannerman and Dr. Marjorie Anderson have assumed that the "flight" resulted from Dalriadic attempts at expansion to the east, in the direction of the central Highlands, although Anderson offers the "alternative explanation" that the Cenél Loairn incurred the wrath of Bruide "while trying to push into Moray up the Great Glen".<sup>344</sup> The Scottish "flight" might, in fact, have been the result of a Pictish repulse of the first efforts of the Cenél Báetán, a branch of the Cenél Loairn, to establish themselves in Morvern or Mull. Regardless of where the Scots were when they fled from Bruide or which of the Dalriadic cenéla did the fleeing, Skene decided that "the territories occupied by the Scots of Dalriada had in consequence been much restricted" to Kintyre, Knapdale and "perhaps Cowal" and suggested that St. Columba's Cave near Cove on Loch Caolisport "was Columba's first church in Scotland before he sailed to Iona",<sup>345</sup> presumably after tensions had eased. Elaborating upon Skene's interpretation of the Annals, Galloway then suggested that the nearby Cladh a' Bhile pillar stones represent the fashion in funerary monuments immediately prior to Columba's foundation of Iona. It is an attractive theory, but the hexafoil on Cladh a' Bhile No. 1 is probably no earlier than the late seventh century, nor do the decorative features of other stones at Cladh a' Bhile suggest a much earlier date, as we shall see. The simple incised crosses on the upright slabs at Achadh na Cille, on the Oib peninsula at the head of Loch Sween, might have been carved as early as the late sixth century, but there is still no reliable means of dating the likely precedence of uninscribed pillar

stones over uninscribed recumbent slabs.

Most of the Iona burial markers were apparently meant to be used as recumbent slabs, prior to the introduction of the ringed cross form, which was also used to decorate burial markers at Iona. In his study of recumbent Irish burial markers, Father Pádraig Lionard noted that the Roman practice of placing small stone tablets in the tomb with the body of the deceased was continued in Merovingian Gaul but small recumbent slabs were also placed on the ground above the filled-in grave both in Gaul and Ireland.<sup>346</sup> The Hartlepool "name-stones" were apparently buried with the dead.<sup>347</sup> Re-used early medieval burial slabs were placed in graves at Clonmacnoise well into the modern period, which may reflect an earlier practice,<sup>348</sup> but there is no evidence that cross-marked stones were interned with the deceased on Iona. The nickname "St. Columba's Pillow" was given to a water-worn boulder with a ringed cross, one of five cross-marked beach pebbles found on Iona, but the stone was only discovered c. 1870 and the modern nickname is taken from Adomnán's description of Columba's use of a stone for a pillow, which was later set atop his grave "as a kind of epitaph",<sup>349</sup> where it would have remained visible. Four Iona pillar stones exhibiting late features discussed in the following chapters, such as ringed crosses and tiny circular armpits,<sup>350</sup> demonstrate that pillar stones were occasionally erected at Iona as late as the ninth or tenth century, by which time the recumbent burial slab was well established. Recumbent Iona slabs with later decorative features are also discussed in the following chapters.

A recumbent slab on Iona later re-used as a pillar stone (fig. 23, no. 18) was originally decorated with two "conjoined" outline crosses, the smaller upper one having two transoms.<sup>351</sup> Raleigh Radford dated an incised outline cross with two transoms at Staplegorton, Dumfriesshire to the seventh century,<sup>352</sup> before the Anglo-Saxon crosses at Ruthwell

and Hoddum had been erected. Professor Thomas discovered a slab on Ardwall Isle in Kirkcudbrightshire with an incised cross composed of intersecting lines, related it to the Staplegorton stone and suggested both are examples of skeuomorphic depictions of a "wooden cross made up of two rectangular slats pinned together or checked into each other".<sup>353</sup> A similar skeuomorph is suggested by the intersecting line of an incised cross on an upright slab at Teampull Fraing on the island of Scalpay, east of Skye and south of Raasay, which may date to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>354</sup> A prehistoric standing-stone, which may have been moved to Cill Chaluim Cille at Tarbert in Jura, has a sunken cross with expanded terminals on opposite sides, each with a rectangular boss at the intersection of the transom and shaft<sup>355</sup> that may represent the nail of a wooden cross composed of two slats nailed together.

The only crosses mentioned on Iona by Adomnán were erected in Columba's lifetime, two between the monastery and the boat-landing and another set up in a quern-stone to mark a spot where Columba rested for a few moments on the day of his death. The quern-stone cross and one of the two near the boat-landing still stood in Adomnán's day.<sup>356</sup> Adomnán describes the deaths of a number of clerics in his Life of Columba but tells us nothing about the decoration of the funerary monuments erected over their graves. The cross in the quern-stone was presumably a wooden one.<sup>357</sup> An outline cross with a pointed foot incised on a pillar stone at Cladh a' Bhile, where a fragment of a quern-stone has also been found, may refer to simple wooden burial markers pointed for purchase in the ground (pl. 23, no. 7).<sup>358</sup> Perhaps wooden crosses were the most common memorials in Columba's lifetime and were gradually replaced by recumbent stone slabs in the seventh century. The earliest datable inscribed slab at Clonmacnoise is a millstone bearing the name of Sechnasach, which is associated with a king of the Uí Maine of Connacht

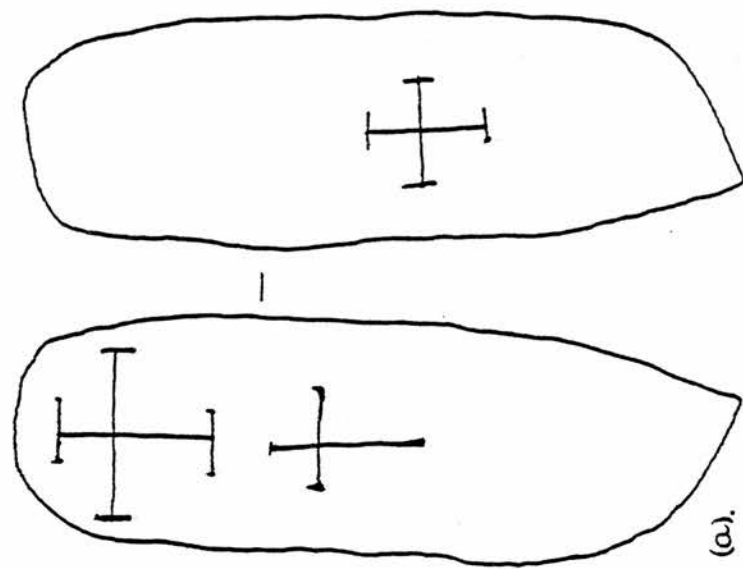
who died between 709 and 712.<sup>359</sup> Clonmacnoise is the only early medieval Insular monastic site with a larger collection of burial markers than Iona but its professional school of tombstone carvers does not seem to have developed much before the late ninth century, by which time Iona was in decline, and the vast majority of Clonmacnoise slabs use ninth and tenth-century decorative patterns.<sup>360</sup> Iona does not appear to have had a permanent "school" of burial marker sculptors of its own but the development of the small cross-marked recumbent grave slab in a Gaelic context may have taken place on an Iona aware of contemporary Gaulish custom rather than in Ireland, where free-standing pillar stones and upright slabs bearing crosses, with or without inscriptions, long enjoyed widespread favour.<sup>361</sup> The standing Irish cross slab achieved its greatest range of expression in Donegal at Drumhallagh, Fahan Mura and Inishkeel, in monuments which Dr. Peter Harbison would now date to the ninth century.<sup>362</sup> A large number of upright pillars and slabs in Donegal, Columba's own country, exhibit decorative features, incised in outline, which imitate metalwork designs of the eighth and ninth centuries,<sup>363</sup> the period when Iona was to make its greatest sculptural contribution to the Old Irish-speaking world, the development of the finely sculptured free-standing cross in a Gaelic idiom.

Tiree attracted the monastic attentions of Brendan the Navigator, Comgall of Bangor and Columba of Iona, suggesting that some at least of the cross-marked stones on Tiree could be as early as the decade preceding Columba's foundation of Iona. Five of the nine apparently early cross-marked stones recorded on Tiree display sunken rather than simple incised crosses (figs. 17b-d).<sup>364</sup> According to the Iona Inventory, sunken crosses "are a sophisticated development from incised crosses either of the linear, or, more probably, the outline variety",<sup>365</sup>

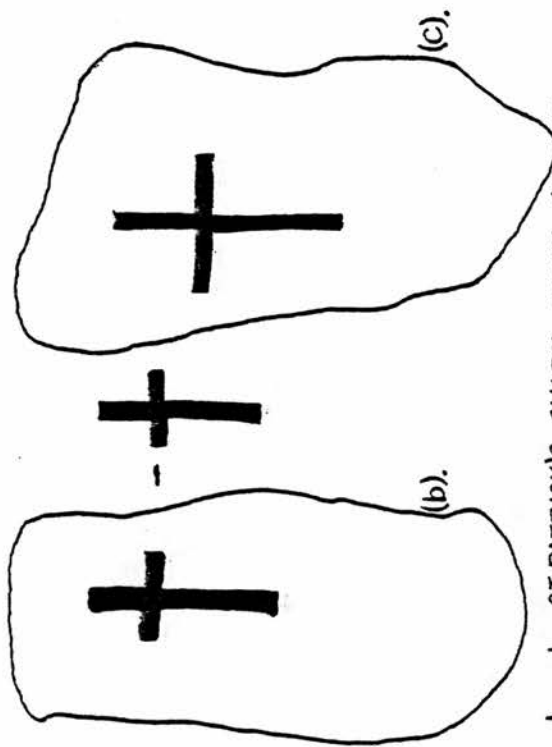
and indeed it seems likely that deeply cut sunken crosses were a later addition to the incised cross carvers' repertoire, which earlier consisted of lightly incised crosses alone. The Barnakill 'Monk's Cross' slab at Poltalloch features a sunken cross over its probably seventh-century inscription (fig. 18b). The sunken cross on an Iona slab with circular hollows above and below the arms (fig. 22, no. 16) may also be as early as the seventh century, but the more exactly excised sunken crosses on Tiree, North Rona,<sup>366</sup> two Iona pillar stones (fig. 23, nos. 18 and 20), and a pillar stone at Calgary in Mull which features a relief cross on the opposite side,<sup>367</sup> may be as late as the eighth or ninth centuries. The technical simplicity of the two crosses incised on rock outcrops at Kirkapoll in Tiree (fig. 17e-f), the incised cross on a lost slab from Cladh Beag<sup>368</sup> and the incised crosses potent and the incised cross with triangular terminals on a boulder at Cladh Beag (fig. 17a), suggests, however, that they might have been carved during Columba's lifetime, if not under the eyes of Brendan of Clonfert or Comgall of Bangor.

In addition to those on the Cladh Beag stone, crosses potent are also found west of Druimalban on Iona, Mull, Pabbay south of Barra, Eilean Mór, and at Achadh na Cille in Knapdale. The two crosses potent on a "narrow irregularly-shaped slab" (fig. 22, no. 17) near St. Martin's cross on Iona have been compared to a similar cross on a thirteenth-century tombstone of an abbot at Dundrennan in Kirkcudbrightshire,<sup>369</sup> but the rough shape of the Iona stone seems more at home in the late sixth, seventh or eighth centuries. Two incised crosses potent and another cross with barred terminals on the arms in the Scoor Cave in Mull (figs. 19a, d) appear to be early, as do the other incised crosses on the walls of the Scoor Cave, and should probably be assigned to the period between the late sixth and the ninth century.<sup>370</sup>

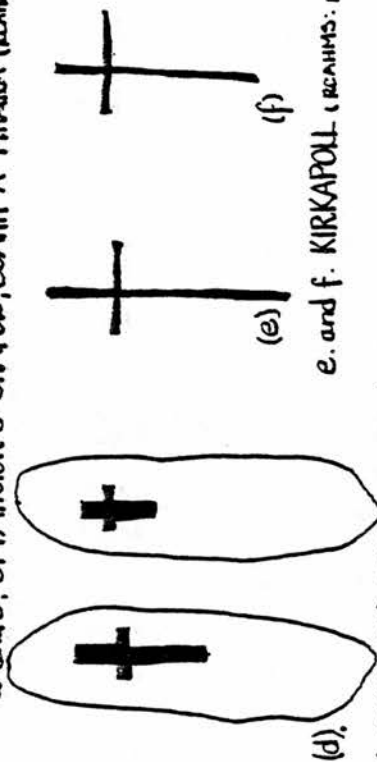
FIG. 17 CROSS-MARKED STONES IN TIREE



(a.) CLADH BEAG (RECHMS: 1980 fig 175).



b. and c. ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL, CEANIN A' MHAIRA (RECHMS: 1980, fig 196, b-c)



e. and f. KIRKAPOLL (RECHMS: 1980 fig 189).

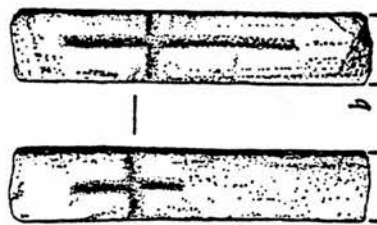
(d) ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL CEANIN A' MHAIRA. (RECHMS: 1980 fig 190a).



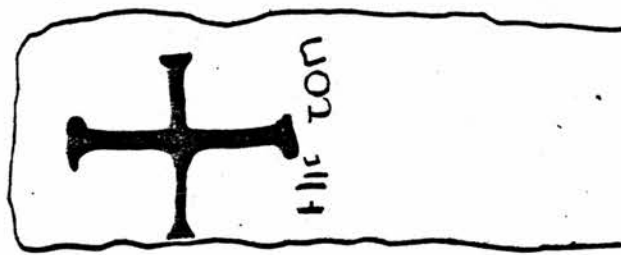
A cross potent from Achadh na Cille (fig. 16e) belongs to the same period. The three punched dots over the arms of a cross with barred terminals and an incised titulus on a slab from Eilean Mór (pl. 20b) are so similar to those above the arms of a cross potent incised on one side of another slab, thought to come from Eilean Mór (pl. 20a), that both are likely to have been carved by the same sculptor.<sup>371</sup>

A cross with incised barred terminals on the ends of the arms was probably a later addition to the Pictish symbols on a pillar stone on Pabbay (fig. 1b) and is unlikely to have been carved before the early eighth century.

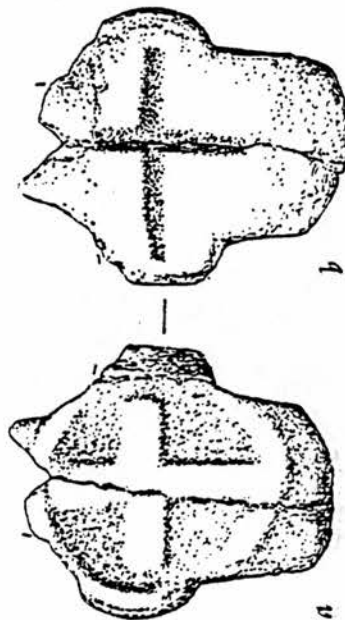
Crosses potent are also found in Wales, southwest Scotland, Ireland and parts of Pictland. Examples at Llanlleonfel, Brecknockshire and Llangernyw, Denbighshire are both of Nash-Williams's seventh to ninth-century type.<sup>372</sup> Raleigh Radford dated the cross potent incised on a wall of St. Ninian's Cave near Whithorn to the seventh century, "if not earlier".<sup>373</sup> Another example is found on a small slab at Millport, Great Cumbrae.<sup>374</sup> A human face similar to those of the human figures on the Drumhallagh and Inishkeel slabs in Donegal is incised in profile above an incised cross potent on the broken Pillar 9 on Inishkea North.<sup>375</sup> Incised crosses potent are found in Donegal on three upright slabs in the Newtownburke townland, a stone at Crannogeboy, a rock outcrop at Lacomell, and on a recumbent burial marker at Kilcashel.<sup>376</sup> An incised cross with barred terminals found on a slab in the nave of the medieval church on St. Ninian's Isle in 1959 "may be as early as Christianity in Shetland", according to Thomas, who would date it to c. 700, "if not a little older".<sup>377</sup> As such, it may reflect an evangelical mission from the West Highlands and Islands. The incised cross potent on a small stone in the Monymusk churchyard in Aberdeenshire is probably early medieval, but the cross



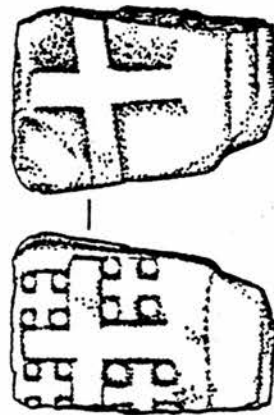
(a) CALGARY, MULL  
(REAHMS 1980: fig. 156)



(b) BARNHAKILL  
(PSAS 59: p. 149)



(c) CROIS BHEINN, NORVERN (REAHMS 1980: fig. 167)



(d) KILLEAN, KINTYRE (REAHMS 1971: fig. 139)

FIG. 18 CROSS-MARKED STONES WEST OF DERMALBAN

potent outlived the Picts in Pictland. Incised crosses potent appear on two slabs at St. Medan's, also in Aberdeenshire, one of which also features a dagger in relief, the other a sword incised in outline.<sup>378</sup> The design of both stones provided for both crosses and blades from the first and the dagger and sword are late medieval.

The most common expanded terminals on incised linear crosses west of Druimalban are triangular expansions and bifid terminals. A number of examples of both are found on Iona (fig. 21, nos. 7-11, fig. 22, nos. 12-16, 106). Crosses with bifid terminals are incised on a small upright stone in the burial ground at Maclean's Point on the island of Berneray south of Barra and on a slab at A' Chill in Canna.<sup>379</sup>

Incised crosses with both kinds of terminals are carved on the walls of the Mull caves (figs. 19-20).<sup>380</sup> An incised cross with triangular terminals is carved on an upright slab in the burial ground on Eileach an Naoimh and on both sides of another slab from Eileach an Naoimh now in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh.<sup>381</sup> The sunken cross on the Barnakill "Monk's Cross" slab now at Poltalloch has triangular terminals and its inscription has been dated to the seventh century (fig. 18b).<sup>382</sup> The Iona MAILFATARIC slab has an incised cross with bifid terminals and its inscription has been dated to the ninth century.<sup>383</sup> The date range of other West Highland and Hebridean incised linear crosses with bifid or triangular terminals probably falls in the same period, from the seventh to the ninth century.

Incised crosses with triangular terminals are not uncommon in Ireland and Wales. Datable examples in Ireland are provided by the Kilnasaggart pillar, whose inscription mentions a Ternoc son of Ciarán the Little, who died in 714 or 716,<sup>384</sup> and a slab at Clonmacnoise inscribed SNEDREAGOL, thought to be an abbot of Clonmacnoise who died between 783 and 786.<sup>385</sup> Other Irish examples are found at Gallen

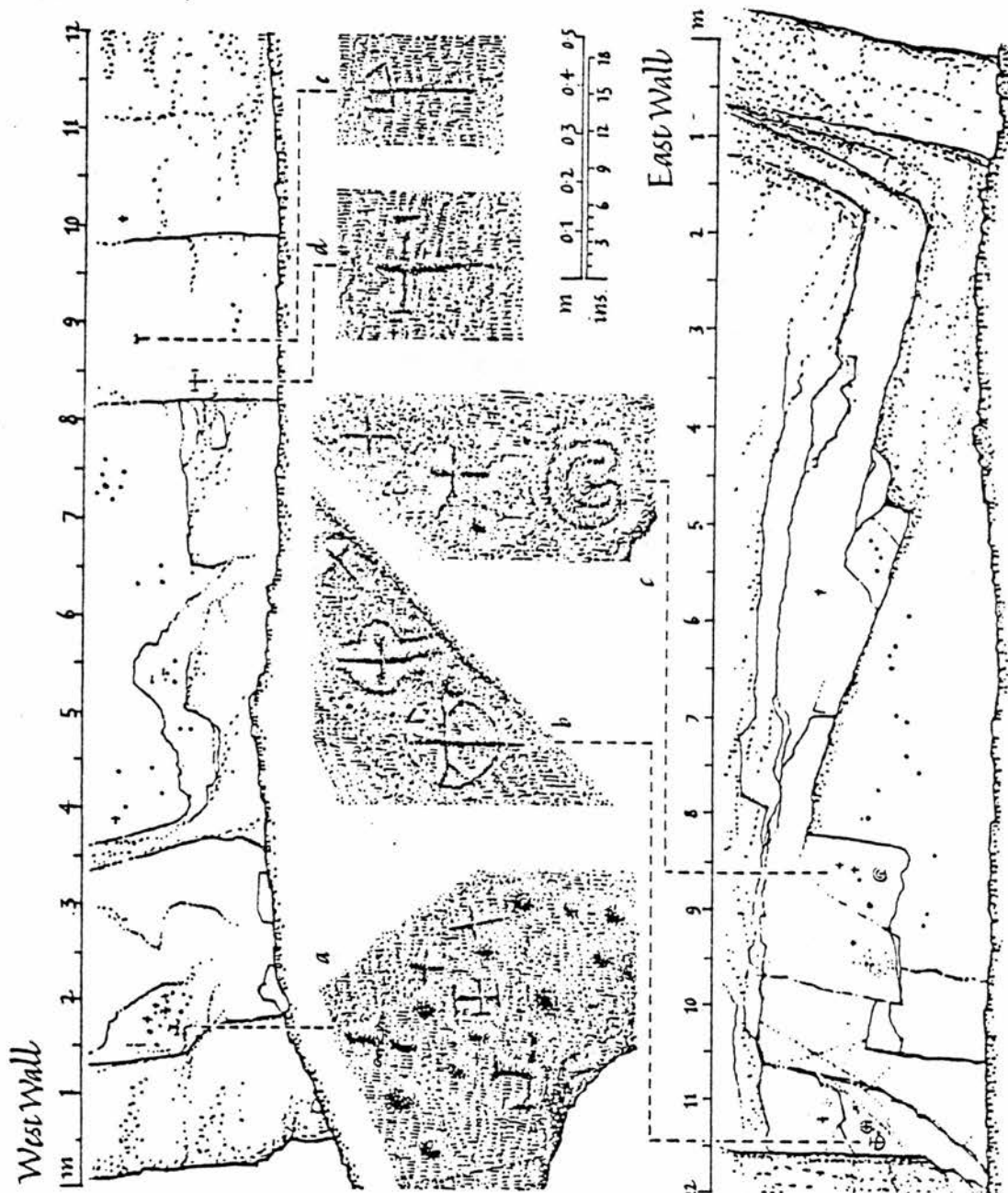


FIG. 19 SCOUR CAVE, MULL.  
(REAHMS 1480, fig. 197)

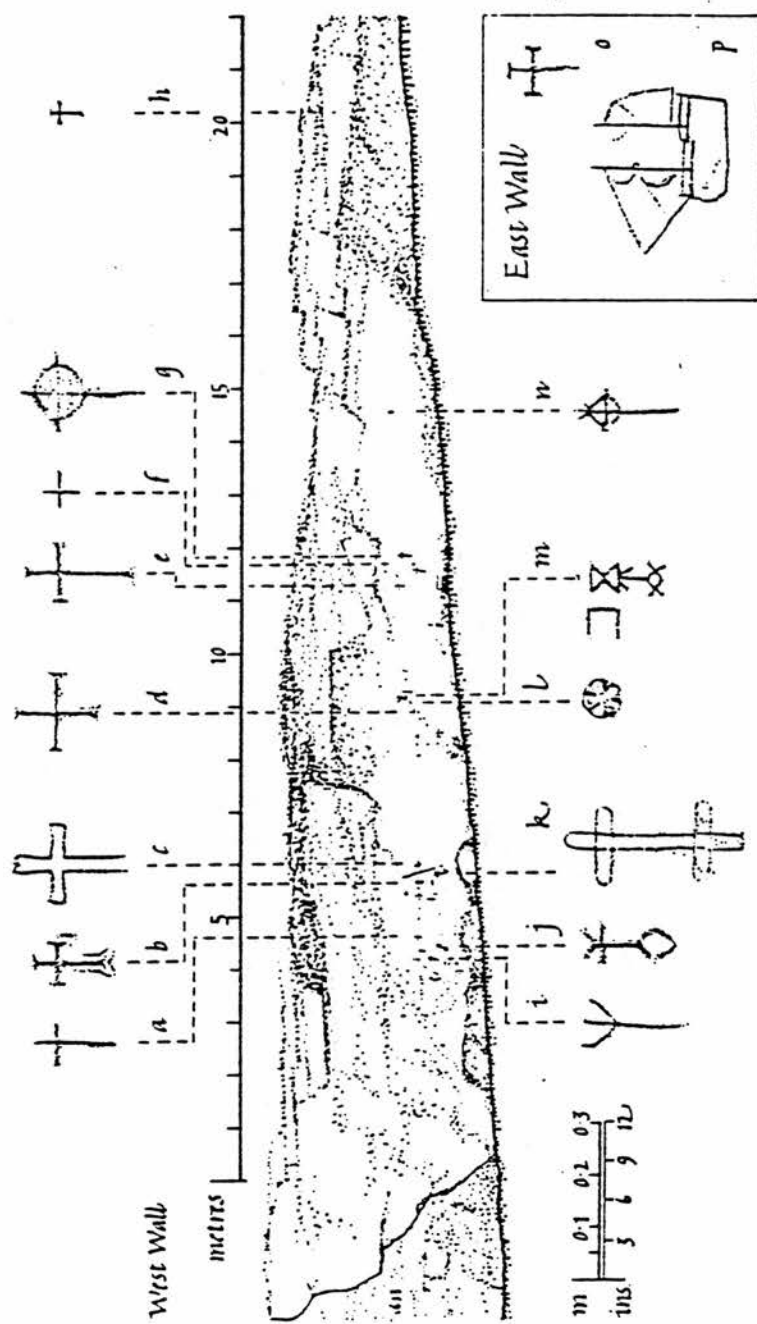


FIG. 20 NUN'S CAVE, CARSAIG, MULL (REAGAN'S 1980, fig. 190)

Priory and Reask.<sup>386</sup> Welsh incised crosses with triangular terminals belonging to Nash-Williams's seventh to ninth-century group are found at Llanlleonfel in Brecknockshire, Port Talbot in Glamorgan and Corwen in Merioneth.<sup>387</sup> An incised cross with triangular terminals is carved alongside the inscription on a slab at Llangadwaladr in Anglesey, which mentions CATAMANUS or Cadfan, a king of Gwynedd who died c. 625.<sup>388</sup> Nash-Williams assigned an early ninth-century date to an inscribed slab with triangular terminals at Caldey Island in Pembrokeshire.<sup>389</sup> Datable Irish and Welsh incised crosses with triangular terminals support the dating suggested for similar crosses in the West Highlands and Islands.

The technical transition between incised linear crosses and incised outline crosses may be marked by a few incised crosses provided with an additional incised outline, although it is likely that all three types were being carved simultaneously throughout the West Highlands and Islands in the eighth and ninth centuries. The crudest Hebridean example is a plain incised cross on the wall of the Scoor Cave in Mull, which has two curving lines incised on either side, perhaps in imitation of a roughly-shaped cruciform stone bearing an incised cross (fig. 19b). A slab with an incised cross with a rectilinear outline has been found on Hirt, St. Kilda.<sup>390</sup> A cross with expanded terminals incised on the wall of the Nuns' Cave in Mull has a bifid foot and an incised outline which neatly follows the shape of the cross and its terminals (fig. 20b). The incised cross potent with an additional incised outline that mirrors the shape of the topmost barred terminal of its incised cross, carved on a pillar stone on Pabbay south of Barra,<sup>391</sup> is probably contemporary, at the earliest, with the cross with barred terminals incised on the Pictish symbol stone at Pabbay (fig. 1b), and is therefore unlikely to be earlier



than the beginning of the eighth century.

Unringed incised outline crosses are found on opposite sides of an upright slab at Kilmartin in Mid-Argyll (pls. 21-2), at Cladh a' Bhile in Knapdale and on the islands of Iona, Mull, Taransay and Bute. Three Cladh a' Bhile pillar stones have outline crosses incised upon them. One shown with a pointed foot (pl. 23, no. 7) may have been a copy of wooden crosses used as burial markers. The outline of another was left open at the base (pl. 23, no. 8). The third, a small upright slab, has a cross with a drilled hole at the centre and incised pellets above the arms on one face (pl. 23, no. 6b). On the opposite face is an incised cross at the centre of the head of an outline cross, which has incised pellets below the arms and small spirals curling outwards from the base (pl. 23, no. 6a). A small circular depression is drilled at the centre of an outline cross on a slab from the Corna Valley in the Isle of Man, which has more lightly incised circular pellets above and below the arms.<sup>392</sup> The incised lines describing the head of an outline cross on a slab in Peel Cathedral, which also has circular pellets above and below the arms, were left open, terminating in incised circles.<sup>393</sup> The similarities between the two Manx examples and the crosses on the Cladh a' Bhile slab suggest a relationship between Man and Knapdale, a connexion also implied by the dedications of Eilean Mór and Keills in Knapdale to Abban móccu Corbmaic and the presence of a Keeil Abban in Man,<sup>394</sup> but the outward-curving spirals at the base of the cross on one side of the Cladh a' Bhile slab instead invoke Irish parallels of a higher quality and more complex design, such as the Kilshanning Chi-Rho and the spirals at the bases of the crosses on the Reask pillar and the Inishkea North and South slabs (fig. 13), although a simpler example is incised in outline on an Inismurray pillar stone.<sup>395</sup> Plain rectilinear outline crosses are

found in Islay on a slab with a pointed foot unearthed at Trudernish near Kildalton and another used to support the socket-stone of the Kildalton cross, which it presumably predates.<sup>396</sup> An outline cross is incised on a possibly prehistoric standing stone, Clach an Teampuill (pl. 24), near the shore of the bay called Loch na h-Uidhe on the island of Taransay, off the southwest coast of Harris.<sup>397</sup> An outline cross is incised on a slab from St. Blane's Church near Kingarth in Bute and may date from the eighth century, if not the seventh.<sup>398</sup> The first monastery on the site was established by St. Blane, the Bláán of Cinn Garad commemorated in the Martyrology of Oengus, who was probably a Briton of Strathclyde.<sup>399</sup>

The open shaft of an outline cross on an Iona slab (fig. 23, no. 23) widens towards the bottom. The extremities of the cross incised on a prehistoric standing stone near Ford, at the western end of Loch Awe, also open towards the ends (pl. 25).<sup>400</sup> The head and foot of the cross incised on a slab at Kilmorey Knap widen towards the ends (pl. 19, lower right). The type may hark back to double outline crosses with expanded arms stamped on imported Ai ware, sherds of which have been found at Tintagel, where a broken slate headstone features an outline cross of the same type,<sup>401</sup> but similar expanded-arm outline crosses are found on Man<sup>402</sup> and most of the Kilmorey Knap slabs carved before the late medieval period display Picto-Scottish and Gall-Ghaidheal features discussed in Chapter 5, suggesting that the Kilmorey Knap outline cross may be no earlier than the ninth century, at the earliest. Professor Cramp dates to the eleventh century a round-headed burial marker at Bolam in Northumberland and two fragments at Haughton-le-Skerne in Durham with incised outline crosses with expanded extremities,<sup>403</sup> but these taper much more sharply towards the centre than do the head and shaft of the Kilmorey Knap cross. Two incised crosses in

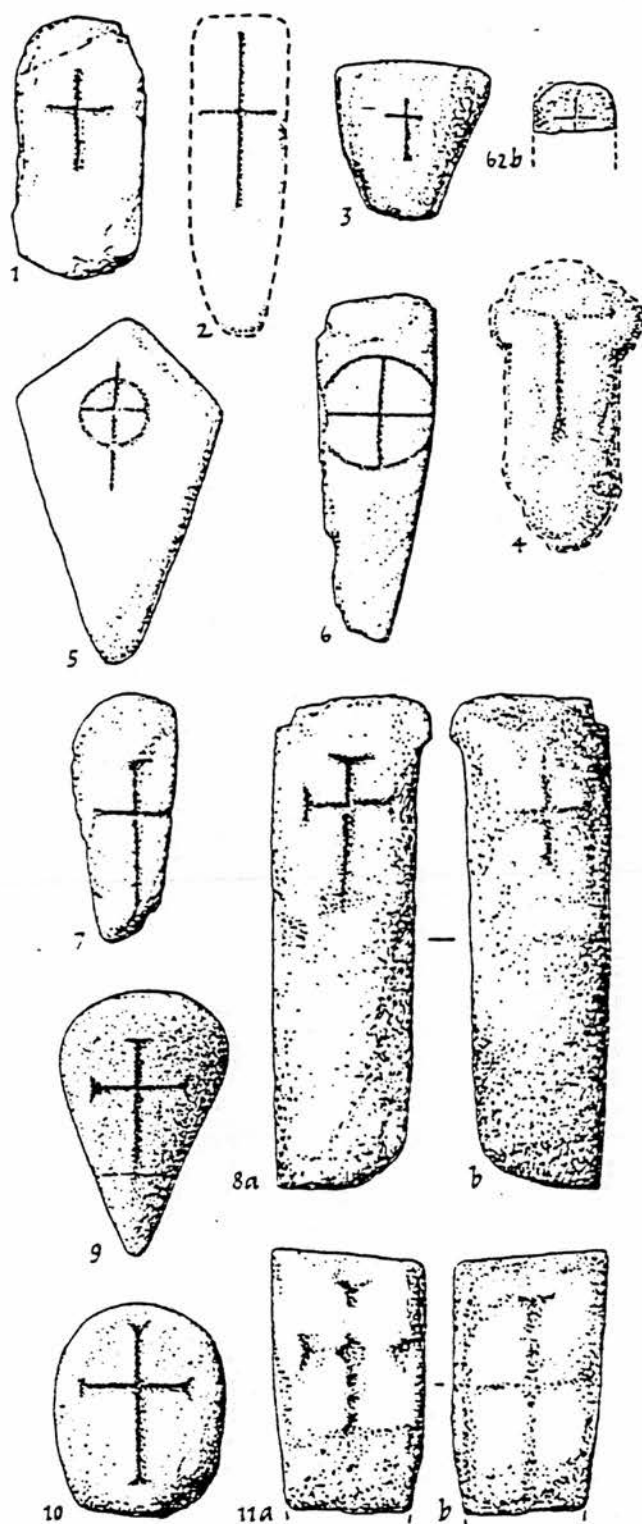


FIG. 21 CROSS-MARKED IONA STONES  
(RCAHMS 1982, p. 180)

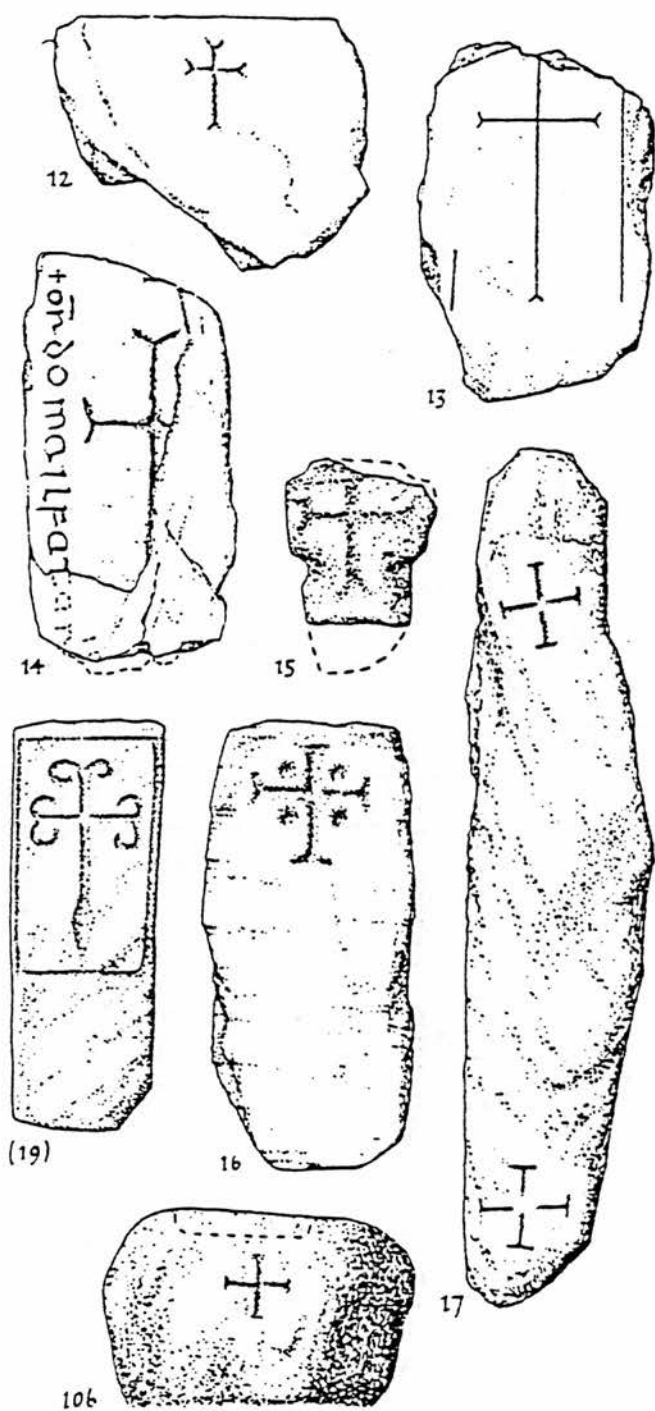


FIG. 22 CROSS-MARKED IONA STONES  
(RCAHMS 1982, p. 181)

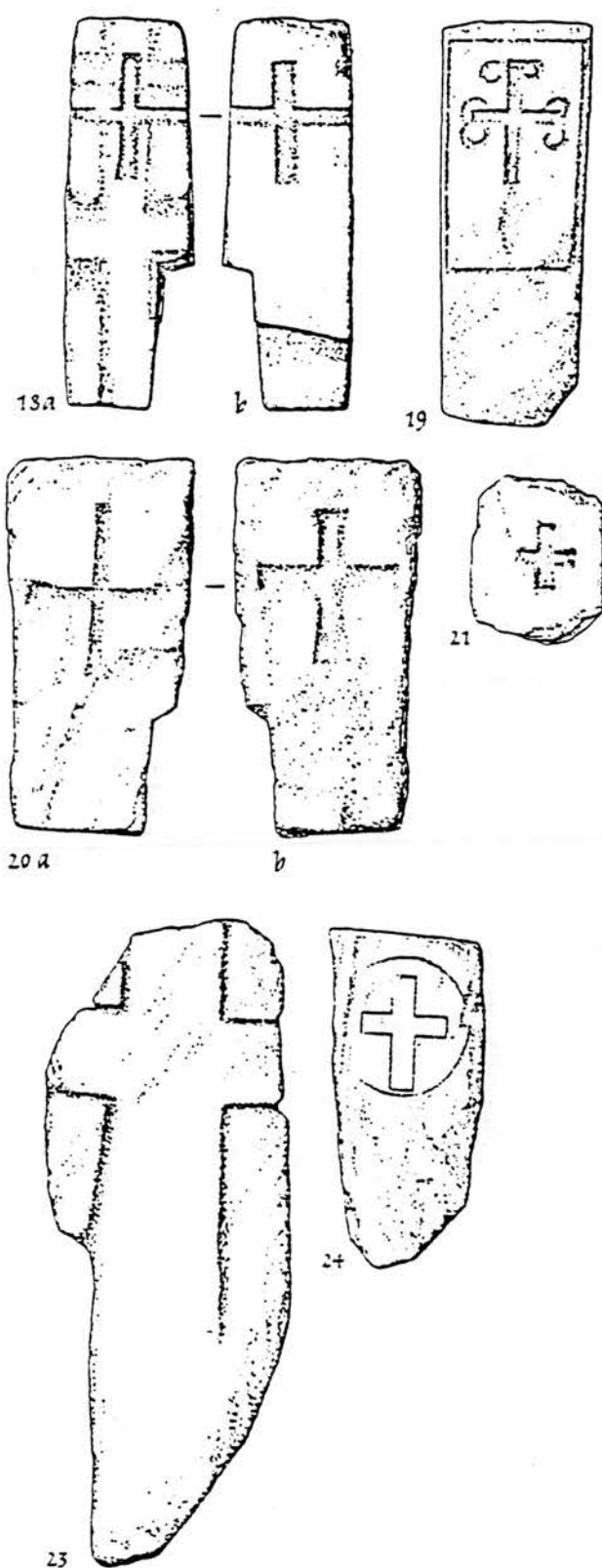


FIG. 23 CROSS-MARKED IONA STONES  
(RCAHMS 1982, pp. 181-2)

the Nuns' Cave in Mull, one of which has two transoms whose lines intersect with those of its shaft (figs. 20b and k) and an outline cross incised on a slab found at Hirt, St. Kilda, with L-shaped incisions at the angles,<sup>404</sup> could have been carved at any time from the seventh century to the twelfth.

A tapered slab in the Iona Museum originally had carved upon it an incised Latin cross with "double volutes" at the ends of the top and side arms, with a "leaf-shaped depression" at the base of the shaft, a design later obscured when a sunken cross was cut into the earlier incised linear cross (figs. 22 and 23, no. 19).<sup>405</sup> The small spirals or "double volutes" belong to an Irish context. Similar decoration is found in Ireland on crosses incised on Slab 5 on Inishkea North, the late sixth-century Kilmalkedar alphabet stone and the early eighth-century Kilnasaggart pillar.<sup>406</sup> The original design on the Iona slab was probably carved between the late sixth and the early eighth century, although the later sunken cross could have been cut as early as the late seventh century. The "leaf-shaped depression" at the foot of the original incised cross is unusual but a similar device appears incised in outline at the foot of an incised cross with barred terminals on a Kirkmadrine cross shaft that also features interlace decoration probably not carved before the ninth century.<sup>407</sup>

A small slab about half a meter tall from Killeen in Kintyre (fig. 18d) has a cross outlined in false relief on one side and, on the other, a false relief cross with crosslets in the quadrants that have circular pellets above and below the arms. The bottom of the stone tapers to a tenon apparently intended to fit vertically into a socket atop a leacht, a free-standing outdoor altar of an Irish type.<sup>408</sup> Charles Thomas has identified leachta, "built up around natural boulders", at Cladh a' Bhile.<sup>409</sup> A number of leachta survive



on Inismurray, where incised crosses with crosslets in the quadrants are also common.<sup>410</sup> Father Lionard has suggested that the multiple cross decoration of the Inismurray stones may have originated with Gaulish depictions of the cross of Christ flanked by the crosses of the two thieves, as on the c. 600 Trasemirus sarcophagus from Mandourel.<sup>411</sup> Edward James notes that such decoration was particularly common on Merovingian sarcophagi carved around Bourges and Nevers, some of which were taken down the Loire for use at Nantes, where Columbanus once boarded ship for Ireland.<sup>412</sup>

A slab on Canna, about two feet high and now in Canna House, has a Maltese cross sunken on one face (pl. 26). A sunken long-shafted cross on the opposite face, with D-shaped expansions on the head and arms (pl. 27), invites comparisons with Northumbrian sculpture, manuscript illumination and Irish slabs on Inis Mór in the Aran Islands and in Donegal. The sunken D-shaped expansions of the head and arms of the cross on the Canna slab appear to be elongated versions of the semicircular expansions of the extremities of the crosses incised on five of the Hartlepool name-stones, two name-stones at Lindisfarne and a fragment of another from Billingham, all of which Professor Cramp dates between the mid-seventh and the mid-eighth centuries.<sup>413</sup>

Elongated D-shaped extensions terminate the arms of the cross on the Lindisfarne Gospels carpet page, fol. 26V.<sup>414</sup> Francoise Henry drew a parallel between the cross on the VII ROMANI slab at Kilbreacan on Inis Mór in the Aran Islands and those on the Hartlepool and Lindisfarne name-stones,<sup>415</sup> but the establishment of Lindisfarne by Aidan of Iona and the foundation of Hartlepool by abbeſs Heiu under the authority of Aidan, who also enjoyed a close relationship with Heiu's successor Hilda,<sup>416</sup> provided the means for artistic influences to travel in either direction. The cross type is unknown at Iona itself. Two slabs

in Glencolumbkille in Donegal, one at Drumroe, the other at Straid or Glebe, feature crosses comprising three linked squares on one face, which Harbison would date to the ninth century.<sup>417</sup> On their opposite sides, both slabs display crosses defined by "double bands" carved in false relief which support large squared heads and have D-shaped or semicircular extensions on the arms.<sup>418</sup> The crosses on the Lindisfarne and Hartlepool name-stones, the Lindisfarne carpet-page and the Inis Mór and Glencolumbkille slabs all have a circular device at the centre, which the Canna cross lacks, although there is no expansion at the foot of the crosses on the Canna and Glencolumbkille stones. The central figure of the connexion between the two legs of the large initial N on fol. 292R of the Book of Kells, the opening page of the text of St. John's Gospel,<sup>419</sup> is a cross with spiral-decorated roundels at top and bottom, no central device at the intersection of transom and shaft and D-shaped expansions on the side arms. The Canna stone was probably carved in the eighth or ninth century, after the Northumbrian name-stones but contemporary with either the Book of Kells or the Donegal slabs.

### Cruciform Stones

Roughly shaped cruciform stones are virtually undatable unless they bear some additional form of decoration. Examples from Iona, Gleann na Gaoithe in Islay and North Rona are undecorated.<sup>420</sup> A lost cruciform stone formerly at the Iona Nunnery bore an incised cross with an expanded foot of indeterminate shape (fig. 21, no. 4).<sup>421</sup> A cruciform stone from Kilchoman in Islay features a relief cross with a cross with bifid terminals incised upon it.<sup>422</sup> The round boss at the centre of the relief cross suggests a metalwork attachment for the transom and shaft of a wooden cross. R. C. Graham was informed in the late

nineteenth century that it was "supposed to have marked the limits of a sanctuary".<sup>423</sup> A cruciform stone with a cross in relief inside a ring, also in relief, on one side and an equal-armed sunken cross on the opposite face may be found near the top of a mountain in Morvern which seems to have taken its name, Crois Bheinn ("Cross Mountain"), from the stone (fig. 18c).<sup>424</sup>

There are two cruciform stones in the burial ground at Cille-bharra in Barra. One has a short broad shaft, shaped top and side arms and an incised cross on one face (pl. 28). The other has short, shaped side arms, an elongated top arm drawn to an exaggerated point on one side, an incised cross on each side of the head and a short narrow shaft which appears to have broken off a once longer shaft at the bottom, suggesting an ambitious if unskilled sculptor (pl. 29). The shape of the top and side arms of the broad-shafted Barra cruciform stone (pl. 28) suggest Northumbrian influence. The top arm is chamfered, as is the top corner of the right arm, but the bottom corner of the right arm and both corners of the left arm are rounded, a feature not found on Northumbrian crosses. The chamfered arms and wide armpits of the Barra stone correspond to Professor Cramp's type C10 cross head, although its short arms are somewhat similar to the chamfered type C11, which Cramp dates to the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>425</sup> Type C10 may have been an intermediary between A10 cross heads, which have wide armpits and squared arm terminals,<sup>426</sup> and C11 cross heads. Elizabeth Okasha has dated the inscriptions on the fragments of five A10 cross heads at Whitby and another example at Carlisle to the eighth or ninth century.<sup>427</sup> An A10 cross with a narrow pedestal is incised in outline on a stone from the Brough of Burrian with an ogham inscription which Padel dates to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>428</sup> Cramp dates the fragments of two A10 cross heads

at Hexham, Nos. 8 and 10, to the eighth century, the remains of a late example of a type A10 cross head at Woodhorn from the mid-tenth to the mid-eleventh century and a complete cross head at Durham, No. 8, with C11 side arms and a C10 top arm, to the eleventh century.<sup>429</sup> On the basis of Northumbrian comparisons, the date range of the broad-shafted Barra cruciform stone falls between the eighth and eleventh centuries. The side arm with rounded corners, however, is rather reminiscent of the D-shaped terminals of the sunken cross on the Canna slab (pl. 27). The short arms of the narrow-shafted Barra cruciform stone (pl. 29) also have rounded corners somewhat similar to those of the D-shaped terminals on the Canna slab, but the elongation and widening of the top arm suggests a possibly later date. Cramp dates to the second half of the eleventh century an incised outline cross on a slab fragment at Haughton-le-Skerne in County Durham, No. 11, which has an elongated top arm, widening towards the end, that is longer than the side arms.<sup>430</sup> On the other hand, the top arm of the sunken Maltese cross on the opposite side of the Canna slab (pl. 26) is longer than the side arms, widens towards the top and probably belongs to the eighth or ninth century. The crosses incised on the two Barra cruciform stones, the rounded corners of both arms of one stone and one arm of the other suggest that both were carved at the same time, either on the eve of the Vikings' arrival in the late eighth or early ninth century, or after the emergence of the Christian Gall-Ghaidheil, between the late ninth and the eleventh or even the twelfth century.

### Sculpture of the White Martyrdom

The presence of simple cross-marked stones on the remote St. Kilda and North Rona, on the small lonely islands of Eileach an Naoimh and Eilean Mór in the Inner Hebrides and, in the Outer Isles, on Pabbay,

Berneray, Boreray, Vallay, and Taransay; the crosses and marigolds found in the caves on Mull and Eilean Mór, in St. Columba's Cave in Knapdale and St. Ciaran's Cave in Kintyre; the crosses carved on stones and rock outcrops at mainland sites difficult of access, such as Cladh a' Bhile, Achadh na Cille and Daltote in Knapdale or Crois Bheinn in Morvern; all bespeak a profound desire to get away from it all, to escape contemporary society and its domesticated animals, to confront God in His own wilderness. Harris is visible from Taransay, North Uist from Boreray. One may walk from Vallay to North Uist at low tide. The Barra group of islands, including Pabbay and Berneray, are within sight of each other on a clear day. The hermit of Eilean Mór could cast his eye on Jura and the Argyll mainland in good weather. Solitude is more tangible when one can be reminded of the existence of others. The distinctive Gaelic ecclesiastical urge towards self-imposed exile and the ascetic life that brought Columba to Iona, Moluag to Lismore, Donnán to Eigg, and Maelrubai to Applecross also scattered cross-marked stones throughout the West Highlands and Islands. The simplicity of the crosses cut in stone from the late sixth to the ninth century west of Druimalban may now seem to have been expressly designed to try to the limits the perseverance and aesthetic sensibilities of modern art historians, but it was the result of a deliberate attempt to achieve a way of life that would focus attention on a single image: the cross.

The early Irish church distinguished three types of martyrdom.<sup>431</sup> Bármatrae or "white martyrdom" was the bloodless sacrifice of asceticism. Donnán of Eigg suffered dergmartrae or "red martyrdom". Glas, either (sky) blue or (grass) green, was the colour of the martyrdom of penitence. The oldest evidence for the threefold Irish division of martyrdom is the text of a sermon in early Old Irish,

linguistically datable to the seventh or early eighth century and now known as the Cambrai Homily, which was copied in a manuscript written in an early Carolingian minuscule that also contains an incomplete copy of the Collectio Canonum Hibernensis and was based on an Irish exemplar.<sup>432</sup> According to the colophon of the manuscript, Cambrai Bib. Mun. 679 (formerly 619), it was made at the order of Albericus, who was bishop of Cambrai and Arras from 763 to 790. According to the Cambrai Homily, "there are three kinds of martyrdom which are counted as a cross to a man".<sup>433</sup> One experiences white martyrdom when "he separates for sake of God from everything he loves, although he suffer fasting or labour". Red martyrdom is the "endurance of a cross and destruction for Christ's sake". Glas martyrdom occurs when one "separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance".<sup>434</sup>

We are concerned here with the white martyrdom. Clare Stancliffe has recently discussed the development of Irish ecclesiastical colour symbolism from the earlier writings of, among others, Jerome, who associated the whiteness of lilies with "the service of a dedicated heart", which is a "daily martyrdom"; Sulpicius Severus, who wrote that St. Martin of Tours "achieved martyrdom though he shed no blood"; and Ambrose, who linked lilies to virginity.<sup>435</sup> Stancliffe, following Dom Louis Gougaud, also notes in this context the description in the Martyrology of Oengus of Job's arrival in heaven "after triumph and bloodless battle" and stresses that the Irish perception of the colours of martyrdom translated Continental sources into an Irish idiom.<sup>436</sup> Gougaud equated white martyrdom with the ascetic life.<sup>437</sup> The Jesuit scholar Dr. John Ryan, who emphasizes the Pauline impetus towards chastity in the development of Christian asceticism, characterizes white martyrdom as "the first great step in the renunciation of the



world" and glas martyrdom as "the practice of exceptional austerity within the life of religion", placing both in a monastic context, but Stancliffe, again following Gougaud, distinguishes between the white martyrdom of monastic life and the regime of penitence that could be endured by laity and religious alike.<sup>438</sup>

Robin Flower related the three types of martyrdom to the three kinds of peregrinatio listed in the Middle Irish Life of Columba, in which case white martyrdom would correspond to the "perfect pilgrimage" of those who "leave their soil and their land, their wealth and their wordly joy for the sake of the Lord of the elements".<sup>439</sup> Stancliffe, who rejects Flower's identification of white martyrdom with the "perfect pilgrimage", restricts its meaning solely to the "daily martyrdom of ascetic life" and cites Columbanus on the mortification of the will "by those who bear martyrdom for Christ" through asceticism.<sup>440</sup> Indeed, Columbanus describes ascetic mortification as the "bliss of martyrdom" and made it a form of mortification "not to go anywhere with complete freedom", but he also described himself throughout his writings as peregrinus.<sup>441</sup> Whatever freedom of movement Columbanus may have denied those under his authority, certainly he himself chose the peregrinatio as the means of achieving the white martyrdom, by separating for sake of God from everything he loved, except perhaps his own authority. Adomnán describes Columba as "living in pilgrimage" at Iona and Fintan or Munnu of Tech-Munnu as one who wished to "live in pilgrimage" at Iona.<sup>442</sup> Adomnán also recounts a prophecy of Columba's that an exhausted Irish crane would land at Iona but, once recovered, would no longer wish to live "in pilgrimage" there.<sup>443</sup> For Adomnán, at least, peregrinatio and the asceticism of monastic life at Columba's Iona were one and the same.

The cross was the focal image in the daily life of those who

experienced the white martyrdom of asceticism in foreign lands and isolated places. Dr. Stevenson, in a recent paper, has argued that the repetitious use of the sign of the cross in the daily lives of Christians had been translated into visual form by the fourth century.<sup>444</sup> Columbanus and Adomnán inform us that the sign of the cross was a constant feature in the daily lives of Gaelic monks by the seventh century. In his Regula Coenobialis, Columbanus uses the verb signare to refer to the blessing of a spoon with which a monk sups, for the blessing of a lamp when lit, for the sign of the cross made by a monk when receiving a blessing, going hurriedly out of the house, or meeting with anyone when walking.<sup>445</sup> Adomnán describes Columba making the signum salutare of the cross to bless a milk vessel, absentmindedly blessing a dagger with his pen, and, in more exceptional circumstances, to drive off a "water beast" in the River Ness.<sup>446</sup>

Not content with merely making the sign of the cross, Gaelic monks also kept cross vigils by praying standing with extended arms. The practice is usually associated with the Céilí Dé reform movement that developed in the eighth century and is described in "The Monastery of Tallaght", "The Rule of the Céilí Dé" and the "Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations", Céilí Dé texts which Professor Binchy would date to c. 800.<sup>447</sup> The cross vigil (crofigell) was also known as the lúirech léire ("breastplate of devotion") and was older than the Céilí Dé. In the "Teaching of Máel-Rúain", a seventeenth-century rendering in Modern Irish of a lost Old Irish original, we are informed that lúirech léire "was the old name given by the elders to the cross vigil".<sup>448</sup> The original meaning of lúirech léire, if not its protective purpose, had become obscured by the time Oengus, himself a member of the Céilí Dé, wrote his Martyrology, in which he seems to imply that the reading of the Martyrology will itself serve as a

luírech léire.<sup>449</sup> In his Lives, Abbán moccu Corbmaic is said to have built a monastery at Cluain Aird Mobecoc, Toureen Peakaun in County Tipperary, where the monk Beccán kept cross vigils. Kenney dated the extant versions of the Lives to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, although they may have been based on an early ninth-century original, but Beccán's death is variously recorded in the Annals in 687, 689 and 690 and his vigils (figle) are mentioned in the Martyrology of Oengus.<sup>450</sup> The Céilí Dé simply took over an older practice and made it their own.

There was a link between the daily martyrdom of ascetic life and peregrinatio until the rise of the Céilí Dé. According to the seventh-century Vita Columbani by Jonas of Bobbio, a nun explained the distinction between monastic life and peregrinatio to the young Columbanus in Leinster, before he went to Bangor. The nun told Columbanus that she had spent fifteen years in her peregrinationis locus but, had she been a man, she would have gone overseas to search for a potioris peregrinationis locus.<sup>451</sup> In a study of the changing nature of Irish peregrinatio, Kathleen Hughes found that the Anglo-Saxon and Continental reaction to Irish peregrini had become unfavourable by the 730s and the Céilí Dé discouraged pilgrimage overseas by the end of the eighth century.<sup>452</sup> Most of the simple cross-marked stones in the West Highlands and Islands were probably carved in the seventh and eighth centuries, when the difference between life in a peregrinationis locus and the quest for a potioris peregrinationis locus was one of degree.

The "white martyrdom" of monastic life "in pilgrimage" developed in the Celtic world in the sixth and seventh centuries. Many of the names on inscribed memorials carved in the British Isles from the fifth to the seventh centuries are given patronymics and would seem to

belong to secular figures. Men identified as sacerdotes and presbiteri in inscriptions in Wales and southwest Scotland in the fifth and early sixth centuries are not accorded patronymics.<sup>453</sup> The production of uninscribed cross-marked stones, in preference to inscribed memorials, apparently grew out of the monastic movement which began to develop in earnest in the second half of the sixth century. The self-effacing nature of stones marked solely with crosses belongs properly to the ascetic life of those who separated from everything they loved for the sake of God. The unadorned incised and false relief crosses of the period were, perhaps more than anything else, the art of the white martyrdom.

#### Christian Sculpture West of Druimalban from the Late Sixth to the Mid-Eighth Century

The earliest Christian sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands, the plain linear incised crosses on pillar stones at Killundine in Morvern, Carsaig in Mull and Achadh na Cille in Knapdale and on upright and recumbent slabs on Iona, Tiree and Eileach an Naoimh, required no artistic influence and were merely the result of the monastic subtraction of the inscriptions that had previously been placed on Christian memorial stones in the British Isles. The transition from stones bearing inscriptions with prefatory crosses or Chi-Rhos to stones bearing crosses or Chi-Rhos alone appears to have taken place simultaneously among the Celtic Christians in Britain and Ireland, as an effect of the rise of the monastic movement.

The incised linear crosses at the Hirsell and Ruthwell are likely to predate the Anglo-Saxon takeover of their respective neighbourhoods, although Celtic influence may have outlived the Synod of Whitby in Northumbria. Professor Cramp dates to the late seventh or early eighth

century a burial marker with a sunken cross from Coquet Island on the coast of Northumberland and relates it to sunken crosses at Iona.<sup>454</sup> The earliest Anglo-Saxon burial markers, the name-stones from Hartlepool, Lindisfarne and Billingham, belong to an artistic milieu that had already begun to move beyond the ascetic martyrdom of self-denial that had characterized monastic funerary monuments of the previous century west of Druimalban.

Sculptors of Celtic Christian monuments began to succumb to a need for greater decoration by the end of the seventh century. The Irish cross slabs at Reask and on Inishkea North and South had recourse to the older secular aristocratic art of the revived La Tène style for their embellishment, an art forsaken by the simple crosses cut on slabs, cave walls and rock outcrops, beginning in the late sixth century. When stone carvers in the West Highlands and Islands began to feel the need of a greater ornamental vocabulary, they turned for inspiration to the south. The extended pedestals incised beneath the linear crosses with expanded terminals on the Gigha "Holy Stone" and the pillar stone at Bagh na h-Uamha in Rum may have depended upon Palestinian pilgrims' flasks and the collection at Bobbio suggests one route by which the motif may have travelled to the Gaelic world. Another possible route is suggested by Adomnán's account of a Gaulish barca landing somewhere in Dál Riata and Lugbe moccu-Min's ability to converse with its crew. The E-ware sherds at Dunadd and Dunollie and in Skye and Kintyre, the tridents in the Mull caves and West Highland and Hebridean marigolds also suggest that there was sufficient traffic between Gaul and Dál Riata for Dalriadic stone carvers to have learned of Merovingian motifs such as tridents and marigolds by means of directly imported Merovingian metalwork and manuscripts. Lugbe moccu-Min may also have been able to speak the Cumbric of Strathclyde and

the apparent Whithorn influence on Chi-Rho monograms and encircled crosses of arcs on pedestals west of Druimalban led to the creation of a group of monuments for which there is virtually no corresponding class in Ireland. Indeed, the La Tène decoration of the Irish cross slabs at Reask and on Inishkea North and South may belong to the eighth century, by which time the earlier austerity of monastic memorials had begun to wane.

Christianity in Pictland and Northumbria developed under the influence of Dál Riata and Pictish and Northumbrian influences do not become readily apparent in the sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands until the creation of the Iona School, with only a few exceptions. The native Pictish tradition and Gaelic taste meet for the first time west of Druimalban in the Raasay symbol stone Chi-Rho, but it is the result of a British-influenced Gaelic version of a Christian symbol adapted for an otherwise Pictish purpose and does not reflect Pictish influence on the sculpture of the Dalriadic Gaels. The sunken cross with D-shaped terminals on the Canna slab and the two cruciform stones in Barra suggest Northumbrian influence in the eighth century, although the Barra stones might be as late as the eleventh.

The Pictish and Northumbrian influences detected by some scholars in the crosses of the Iona School have come to be seen as a case of the pigeons coming home to roost. We shall now see to what extent that was indeed the case.



### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

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  454. Cramp 1984, 170, pl. 164: 864.



#### IV. THE CROSSES OF THE IONA SCHOOL

A network of stylistic and iconographical relationships between six sculptured crosses and the fragment of a seventh suggest the existence of an early medieval workshop or "school" based at Iona. Three of the crosses, St. Oran's, St. John's and St. Martin's, have been found at Iona. The Kildalton and Kilnave crosses are in Islay. The decoration of a cross arm from Nave Island, off the north coast of Islay, is related to that of the Kilnave cross. The Keills cross in Knapdale is the only early medieval Iona School cross on the Argyll mainland. The Iona School crosses comprise the most cohesive, sustained sculptural effort in the West Highlands and Islands in the early medieval period. Their sculptors must have been aware of the earlier development of relief sculpture in Northumbria and Pictland but the ornamental vocabulary and the iconography of the Iona School crosses appear to have been drawn primarily from objects in other media. The limits now acceptable for the dating of Iona School crosses fall between the mid-eighth and the early ninth century.<sup>1</sup> In order to establish the cultural milieu to which the Iona School belonged, the intellectual and political fortunes of the Iona monastery, from its foundation to the early ninth century, are reviewed below. There follows a discussion of the development of relief sculpture in Northumbria and Pictland. The decoration, iconography and dating of the Iona School crosses are examined thereafter.

##### Iona from Columba to Adomnán

Iona was involved in political affairs from its inception. Columba was on friendly terms with Riderch Hen, the British king of Strathclyde.<sup>2</sup> His journey or journeys to the Pictish king Bruide son

of Maelchú may have been more diplomatic than evangelical.<sup>3</sup> Columba consecrated Aedán mac Gabráin as king of Dál Riata on Iona and was instrumental in determining the status of Scottish Dál Riata in relation to the northern Irish kingdoms at the Convention of Druim Cett.<sup>4</sup>

Scribal activity also began at Iona under Columba. Adomnán describes Columba copying books, a request to correct a Psalter transcribed by Baíthíne and miracles involving manuscripts written by Columba.<sup>5</sup> The pre-Vulgate Old Latin text of the passage of Psalm 33 which Adomnán quotes Columba as copying shortly before his death weighs against the tradition that Columba wrote the Cathach, whose text is a very pure version of Jerome's Gallicanum.<sup>6</sup> Adomnán mentions a book of hymns written by Columba and Columba is credited with the authorship of two Latin hymns: Altus Prosator, which depends upon an Old-Latin Bible text, and the first part of Noli Pater Indulgere, written in a style similar to Altus Prosator.<sup>7</sup>

The Iona monastery provided the prevailing ecclesiastical influence in Pictland until king Nechtan of the Picts conformed to Rome in the early eighth century. The Annals of Ulster record the deaths in 623 and 679 of abbots of Ner, one of whom is connected with Scotland in the Martyrology of Oengus, and O'Rahilly identified Ner as a Columban foundation at Deer in Aberdeenshire.<sup>8</sup> Adomnán refers to Columban monasteries in Pictland in his own lifetime and Cúretán, bishop of Rosemarkie in Easter Ross, served as a g<sup>u</sup>rantor for Adomnán's Lex Innocentium, promulgated in Ireland in 697.<sup>9</sup> Bede also implies that Iona exercised authority over the church in Pictland, at least until the reign of king Nechtan.<sup>10</sup>

Iona enjoyed a period of expansion among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the seventh century, until the defeat of the Iona faction at the

Synod of Whitby. At the request of king Oswald of Northumbria, who had spent some time in exile at Iona, abbot Ségéne of Iona sent bishop Aidan to Northumbria after Oswald came to power c. 634.<sup>11</sup> Aidan's first two successors, Finán and Colmán, also came from Iona. Bishop Finán baptized king Peada of the Middle Angles, the son of Penda of Mercia, and consecrated Cedd as bishop of the East Saxons. Cedd and abbess Hilda of Hartlepool supported Iona at the Synod of Whitby.<sup>12</sup> Shortly before Aidan left Iona for Northumbria, the southern Irish conformed to the Roman method of calculating the date of Easter and abbot Ségéne of Iona was urged to do the same in a letter written by one Cumian c. 632, possibly after the return from Rome of a southern Irish delegation.<sup>13</sup> Ségéne's resistance brought Iona into direct contact with the papacy. The Pope-Elect John IV, in response to letters sent to his predecessor Severinus, wrote a letter in 640 to the abbots of Iona, Armagh, Clonard, Clonmacnoise, and other Irish monasteries, in which he denounced them as heretics for failure to keep the Roman date of Easter.<sup>14</sup> Iona remained unmoved. The decision of Oswiu of Northumbria to champion the Roman party at the Synod of Whitby in 664 and the withdrawal of Colmán of Lindisfarne to Iona and then to Mayo occurred during the Iona abbacy of Cumíne the White, who died in 669.<sup>15</sup>

Cumíne had a "splendid intellect" according to the Martyrology of Oengus and was the author of a Liber de virtutibus sancti Columbae, of which only an excerpt survives in the Schaffhausen manuscript of Adomnán's Life of Columba written by Dorbéne, who served as either abbot or bishop of Iona for five months before his death in 713.<sup>16</sup> Gaelic hagiographical writing had begun in earnest in the mid-seventh century with the Vita Brigidae by Cogitosus, which claimed precedence for the bishop of Kildare over all Irish bishops and may have been influenced

by an early seventh-century Breton Life of Samson of Dol.<sup>17</sup> The pioneering efforts of Cogitosus are mentioned in the Prologue to Muirchú's Life of Patrick written, along with the memoranda on Patrick's mission by Tirechán, between 661 and 700.<sup>18</sup> Armagh had apparently conformed to Rome by 688 and Professor Binchy dates Muirchú and Tirechán to the period following the Synod of Whitby, when Armagh saw its chance to gain prestige at the expense of an Iona in retreat.<sup>19</sup> Wilfrid had belittled the memory of Columba at Whitby and Cumíne may have written his Liber de virtutibus as a defence of Iona when it was under attack, both outside and within the Gaelic world.<sup>20</sup> Professor Duncan suggests that Colmán of Lindisfarne may have prompted Cumíne to write it after the Synod of Whitby.<sup>21</sup>

#### Adomnán

Adomnán became the ninth abbot at the death of his predecessor Failbe in 679 and set about restoring Iona to its former position in the world. Adomnán was on good terms with Pictish, Northumbrian and Irish kings. The legendary account in the late Irish Betha Adamnáin of the burial at Iona of the Pictish king Bruide son of Bili and Adomnán's attempt to revive him suggests friendship in addition to the cooperation between the two which would have been required if the body of Ecgfrith of Northumbria was sent to Iona for burial after Bruide's victory at Dunnichen, as Symeon of Durham reports.<sup>22</sup> Adomnán negotiated with Aldfrith of Northumbria on behalf of the Uí Néill king of Brega c. 686 and returned to Northumbria a second time c. 688.<sup>23</sup> He promulgated his Lex Innocentium or Cáin Adomnáin at the Synod of Birr in Ireland in 697 and Máirín Ní Dhomnadhá has established that its list of guarantors dates from the original promulgation.<sup>24</sup> The guarantors include the bishop of Armagh, Patrick's biographer Muirchú

and Muirchú's patron, bishop Áed of Sleibte, the abbots of Bangor, Clonmacnoise, Kildare, and Clonard, St. Moling of Tech-Moling, the probably Pictish bishop Curetán of Rosemarkie, as well as bishop Ceti of Iona. In addition to Eochaid son of Domangart, king of Scottish Dál Riata, the secular guarantors included the Pictish king Bruide son of Derile, the Uí Néill kings of Cenél Conaill and Cenél Eógain, the kings of the Airgialla and the Ulaid, and, in the south of Ireland, the overkings of Munster and Leinster and the lesser kings of the Osraige and Déisi, among others.

The support Adomnán was able to garner for Cáin Adomnáin from the Armagh faction and religious and lay leaders in the south of Ireland, which had conformed to Rome by c. 632, lends credence to Bede's account of Adomnán's conversion by Ceolfrið at Jarrow to the Roman method of calculating the date of Easter, which probably took place on his second journey to Northumbria in 688.<sup>25</sup> According to Bede, Adomnán subsequently failed to induce the Iona paruchia to keep the Roman Easter, so he went to Ireland and persuaded those who had not yet conformed to adopt Roman practices, then returned to Iona shortly before his death in 704.<sup>26</sup> The annals, in contrast to Bede, show that Adomnán travelled to Ireland in 692 and again in 697.<sup>27</sup> Attempts have been made to interpret the annals in deference to Bede,<sup>28</sup> but the annalistic record derives from the lost Iona Chronicle, which is discussed at greater length below. Internal evidence shows that the Life of Columba was written at Iona. The Andersons date its writing between Adomnán's second Northumbrian journey c. 688 and his trip to Ireland in 692, suggesting that he spent most of the period between 692 and 704 away from Iona.<sup>29</sup> Jean-Michel Picard, however, argues that Adomnán did not spend the years between 692 and 697 in Ireland but travelled to Ireland c. 692 to promote the interests of Iona and

returned for the promulgation of Cáin Adomnáin in 697, which was facilitated by the accession of Loingsech son of Oengus, the Cenél Conaill guarantor of Cáin Adomnáin, to the Tara kingship c. 695. Tara was ruled between 658 and 695 by the Síl nÁedo Sláine, who favoured Armagh.<sup>30</sup> We know from Bede that the Northumbrian overlordship of north Britain ended at Dunnichen and Picard points out that Adomnán's friendship with Aldfrith, who had spent time in exile at Iona and succeeded Ecgfrith in Northumbria, would have made Adomnán less susceptible to Northumbrian ecclesiastical pressure than Bede implies.<sup>31</sup> Picard dates the Life of Columba to c. 700 in view of Adomnán's description of his return to Iona after the "Irish synod", which Picard identifies as the Synod of Birr.<sup>32</sup>

It must be remembered that Adomnán was an Uí Néill aristocrat skilled in diplomacy, used to the exercise of ecclesiastical power and on familiar terms with secular rulers. As such, he may have tactfully created the impression at Jarrow that he intended to strive for Gaelic conformity to Rome more than he actually did, although he was personally convinced of the strength of Ceolfrith's arguments. Nonetheless, he wrote the Life of Columba primarily for the benefit of Iona and its Columban tradition. Picard proposes that Adomnán wrote the Life for three different audiences: Gaelic, Northumbrian and Continental. "Wishing to satisfy the pressing requests of the brethren", Adomnán wrote for a Gaelic audience, with the full support of his own monastery, to reassert the claims of Iona against the aggrandizement of Armagh.<sup>33</sup> Ceolfrith had compared Columba unfavourably with St. Peter when Adomnán met Ceolfrith at Jarrow, but Adomnán granted Columba "a like share of honour with the apostles Peter and Paul and John" and reminded a possible Northumbrian audience that their king Oswald won his victory at Deniseburn c. 634 after being promised victory by Columba in a



vision, a detail Bede later omitted in his account of the battle. Adomnán learned of the vision from his predecessor Failbe, who had heard Oswald tell the story to Ségéne, the fifth abbot of Iona.<sup>34</sup> Picard also suggests that Adomnán may have been writing for a wider audience on the Continent, where "the Irish and their activities were not always well-considered".<sup>35</sup> As far as the Gaelic and Northumbrian audiences are concerned, it does not matter whether Adomnán wrote the Life of Columba between 688 and 692 or not until c. 700. In either case, he had already heard Ceolfrith's arguments at Jarrow. Adomnán may have exerted subtle pressure in favour of Roman conformity at Iona after 688, but his considerable diplomatic ability enabled him to appear Romanizing enough to gain the support of the Roman faction in Ireland for Cáin Adomnáin, while he continued to uphold the viability of the Columban paruchia.

Adomnán alluded to some knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in the second Preface to the Life of Columba and further reveals his erudition in his other known work, De Locis Sanctis.<sup>36</sup> Bede informs us that the Frankish bishop Arculf, who had travelled extensively in the Middle East, was shipwrecked somewhere on the west coast of Britain and called at Iona, where he gave an account of his travels to Adomnán, who was already knowledgeable about the "holy places".<sup>37</sup> Adomnán merely relates that he first wrote out Arculf's observations on wax tablets and later committed them to vellum.<sup>38</sup> Internal evidence dates Arculf's travels between 679 and 682 and Bede reports that Adomnán presented a copy of De Locis Sanctis to Aldfrith of Northumbria.<sup>39</sup> Adomnán refers in it to Greek books and Greek histories which he had read.<sup>40</sup> Adomnán's Biblical quotations in the Life of Columba apparently depended upon a Vulgate text for the New Testament, although his copy of the Old Testament may have had some Old-Latin variations.

There is little in his few quotations from the Psalter to distinguish between either the Vulgate or an Old-Latin text, although Adomnán's Psalter text agrees for the most part with Jerome's Gallicanum.<sup>41</sup>

Other texts available to Adomnán included "practically the whole corpus of Jerome's writings", Sulpicius Severus's Epistles, Dialogues and Life of Martin, Evagrius's translation of the Life of Anthony by Athanasius, the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, the Life of Germanus of Auxerre, and the Actus Silvestri.<sup>42</sup> Donald Bullough accepts Brünig's contention that Adomnán was acquainted with Vergil's Aeneid, but Professor Julian Brown believes that any Gaelic knowledge of classical Latin literature in the seventh and eighth century was derived "through patristic authors such as Jerome, through Isidore, through the Late Antique grammarians".<sup>43</sup> Père Grosjean found traces of "Hisperic" Latin in Altus Prosator and Adomnán and suggested that Iona might have had a copy of the Hisperica Famina.<sup>44</sup>

Bullough has pointed out that the author of the anonymous Vita Cuthberti written at Lindisfarne between 698 and 705 was familiar with Evagrius, Sulpicius Severus, Gregory's Dialogues, and the Actus Silvestri, took his Psalter text from the Gallicanum rather than the Romanum used by Bede, and therefore belonged to the same intellectual milieu as Adomnán.<sup>45</sup> The Lindisfarne Vita Cuthberti refers to king Aldfrith's sojourn at Iona while in exile, which Bede fails to mention; the Lindisfarne Vita does not make Cuthbert on his deathbed admonish his monks to avoid contact with those who fail to keep Easter at the proper time, as Bede has him do in his Prose Life, and Picard suggests that Lindisfarne may have been less exercised by the Easter controversy than was Monkwearmouth-Jarrow.<sup>46</sup>

#### From Adomnán to the Viking Attacks

Disagreement over the date of Easter continued at Iona after the

death of Adomnán. The date of Easter was changed at Iona in 716, according to the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach and Tigernach further informs us that the Roman tonsure was "put upon" the monks of Iona in 718.<sup>47</sup>

We know from Bede that the Anglo-Saxon Ecgberct, who had spent some considerable time in Ireland, was responsible for the adoption of the Roman Easter at Iona and died there in 729, under which date his death is also recorded in the annals.<sup>48</sup>

Bede tells us that Ecgberct first arrived at Iona in 716.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Kirby and Professor Duncan suggest that Ecgberct had already spent some time among the Picts and Duncan further proposes that, after an initial attempt to change the date of Easter at Iona in 712-3, Ecgberct attached himself to king Nechtan of the Picts and may have written the letter to Jarrow, requesting information on Roman observances and the loan of some stonemasons to build a stone church, which led to the Pictish defection from the ecclesiastical dominance of Iona.<sup>50</sup>

Ó Cróinín rejects Duncan's interpretation because of lack of evidence but Bede clearly states that Ecgberct spent time in exile among both the Irish and the Picts.<sup>51</sup> Duncan also suggests that Ecgberct, after returning to Iona, may have been responsible for annal entries on Pictish matters written at Iona between c. 713 and 729.<sup>52</sup>

Other aspects of Duncan's interpretation of the sources are less likely to find favour. The expulsio familiae Iae trans Dorsum Brittaniae a Nectano in 717 is usually thought to mean that Nechtan expelled anti-Roman Iona monks from Pictland, but Duncan takes the expulsio and the adoption of the Roman tonsure at Iona in 718 to mean that Nechtan was in a position to send the anti-Roman faction at Iona to Pictland and to tonsure the monks forcibly at Iona a year later.<sup>53</sup> There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Nechtan had any

authority over Iona at the time. Dr. Smyth characterizes Nechtan as a king troubled by unrest within his own kingdom who turned the lingering Easter controversy at Iona to his own political advantage. Ceolfrith's reply to Nechtan praises Adomnán for his acceptance of the Roman Easter and Smyth interprets Nechtan's conformity to Rome as political support for the pro-Roman faction in Pictland,<sup>54</sup> which would already have been in sympathy with the pro-Roman faction at Iona engendered by Adomnán. The support given Cáin Adomnáin by bishop Curretán of Rosemarkie and king Bruide son of Derile suggests that some Pictish leaders may have been in sympathy with Adomnán's Romanizing tendencies before 700.<sup>55</sup> King Nechtan is usually thought to have been the Nechtan son of Derile who was involved in the Pictish civil wars in the 720s and died in 732, but Duncan would make him instead the son of Drostan and a rival of the sons of Derile, in view of annal entries for 713, when a son of Derile was killed and Nechtan held captive Tolarg son of Drostan, who is described as Nechtan's brother.<sup>56</sup> In either case, the entries support Smyth's contention that the Nechtan who wrote to Ceolfrith had to contend with warring factions in his own kingdom.<sup>57</sup> The expulsion of the Iona monks in 717 would seem to be the act of a Pictish king asserting royal control over the church in Pictland.<sup>58</sup> It would not have been to Nechtan's advantage to send contentious anti-Roman monks from Iona into Pictland.

The Easter controversy may have continued to trouble Iona after 718. The annals suggest the existence of more than one abbot at Iona between the death of Adomnán and 766.<sup>59</sup> The apparent multiplicity of Iona abbots in the eighth century has usually been explained as either a reflection of the Easter controversy, in which case rival factions would have had their own abbots long after 716, or as a result of confusion arising from the use in the annals of the terms principatus,

abbas and katedra, which may refer to different posts in the monastic hierarchy.<sup>60</sup> Dr. Bannerman suggests instead that rival abbots at Iona in the eighth century may have depended upon the rival patronage of the Cenél Loairn, who began to produce Dalriadic overkings at the end of the seventh century, and the previously dominant Cenél nGabráin.<sup>61</sup> Ferchar Fota of the Cenél Loairn was king of Dál Riata at the end of the seventh century and was succeeded by his son Selbach, who suffered opposition both from the Cenél nGabráin and within his own Cenél Loairn and entered monastic life in 723. Eochaid, a grandson of the disastrous Domnall Brecc, regained the Dalriadic kingship for the Cenél nGabráin from Selbach's son Dúngal in 726 and died in 733. Dúngal incurred the wrath of the great Pictish king Oengus son of Fergus when he seized Oengus's son Bruide on Tory Island in 733. Dúngal fled to Ireland in 734 to escape the "power of Oengus", but Oengus captured Dúngal and the Cenél Loairn fort at Dunadd during the Pictish invasion of Argyll in 736. Muiredach son of Ainfcellach of the Cenél Loairn seems to have been king of Dál Riata between 733 and his defeat by Oengus's brother Talorgan in 736. There was a further percutio Dal Riatai by Oengus in 741. Oengus effectively smashed the rise of the Cenél Loairn and the Cenél nGabráin eventually retrieved the Dalriadic kingship, probably in the person of Áed Find, who fought a battle against the Picts in Pictland in 768 and died in 778.<sup>62</sup>

Professor Duncan accepts Bannerman's suggestion that any dual abbacies at Iona between the deaths of Adomnán in 704 and abbot Sléibíne in 767 may mirror the struggle between the two leading Dalriadic kindreds, but Duncan still holds that the Easter controversy is most likely to have produced candidates for rival abbots within the Iona monastery.<sup>63</sup> If that were the case, then abbot Dúnchad, whom Bede mentions in connexion with Iona's adoption of the Roman Easter in

716, would presumably have led the Romanizing party at Iona.<sup>64</sup>

Dúnchad obtained the principatus of Iona in 707 and died as abbas Iae in 717. He apparently shared authority for three years with Connmail mac Failbe, who died as abbas Iae in 710.<sup>65</sup> Connmail belonged to an Airgialla sept and there were Airgialla among the Cenél Loairn.<sup>66</sup>

The Cenél Loairn might therefore have championed the anti-Roman faction at Iona and installed Connmail as their representative. The guarantor list of Cáin Adomnáin includes a Conamail mac Conain epscop. Ní

Dhonnchadha argues that the annotator of the extant guarantor list, which only survives in the late fifteenth-century Rawlinson B.512 and the seventeenth-century Ó Cléirigh Brussels manuscript, mistakenly equated the Connmail of Cáin Adomnáin with Connmail son of Cano of Skye, who died in 705. There is no indication that Cano's son was a cleric but the Connmail of Cáin Adomnáin is included among the

ecclesiastical guarantors, his name following those of bishops Ceti of Iona and Curretán of Rosemarkie and preceding that of the abbot of Clonard. Ní Dhonnchadha therefore identifies the Connmail of Cáin Adomnáin as the Connmail who died as abbot of Iona in 710, although there is no evidence that Connmail of Iona was a bishop.<sup>67</sup> If Ní

Dhonnchadha is correct, Connmail mac Failbe, who supported Adomnán in 697 and later shared authority at Iona with the Romanizing Dúnchad, would have been installed at Iona by the Cenél Loairn for reasons which had nothing to do with the Easter controversy. The association of the abbots of Iona with the Cenél nGabráin began with Columba's consecration of Aedán mac Gabráin as king of Dál Riata and continued even after abbot Cumíne expressed his displeasure with the disastrous Domnall Brecc.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the prestige of the Cenél nGabráin kings

would appear to have depended more upon the approval of the abbots of Iona than the Iona abbots were in need of the active favour of the



Cenél nGabráin. An abbot installed by the patronage of the Cenél Loairn would have reversed the order of the relationship and would have been resisted by some within the monastery, irrespective of the date of Easter.

Iona and the other monastic establishments in the West Highlands and Islands were not subjected to the attacks suffered by Irish monasteries in the eighth century.<sup>69</sup> Dúngal of the Cenél Loairn profaned the sanctuary on Tory Island off the Donegal coast when he captured the Pictish Bruide son of Oengus in 733,<sup>70</sup> but there is no indication that either the struggle for supremacy between the Cenél nGabráin and the Cenél Loairn or the Pictish conquest of Dál Riata between 736 and 741 involved assaults on monasteries. Nor were there any conflicts between Iona and the non-Columban paruchiae west of Druimalban, as there were between Clonmacnoise and Birr in 760 and between Durrow and Clonmacnoise in 764.<sup>71</sup>

Iona appears to have played an integral part in the eighth-century ecclesiastical reform movement that culminated in the emergence of the Céilí Dé. The Iona monk Cú-chuimne, who is called sapiens at his death in 747 and wrote the Latin hymn Cantemus in omni die in praise of the Virgin, was a co-author with Ruben of Dair-inis of the Collectio Canonum Hibernensis.<sup>72</sup> The Collectio emphasizes the importance of bishops and the Roman tonsure and includes Isidore of Seville among its sources, the earliest clear evidence that the works of Isidore were known at Iona.<sup>73</sup> The Biblical text used in the Collectio is the Vulgate, with some Old-Latin intrusions.<sup>74</sup> Since Adomnán is the latest author cited in the Collectio and Ruben of Dair-inis, "scribe of Munster", died in 725, Kathleen Hughes dated the initial compilation of the Collectio between Adomnán's death in 704 and 725 and its completion before Cú-Chuimne's death in 747.<sup>75</sup> Ruben may have been

at Dair-inis during the early years of the abbacy of Fer-Dá-Crích, who died in 747 and is traditionally regarded as the tutor of Máel-Rúain, the founder of the monastery of Tallaght and father of the Céilí Dé, who died in 792.<sup>76</sup> Fer-Dá-Crích is cited or mentioned several times in the early ninth-century "Monastery of Tallaght" and Máel-Rúain calls him "our father" or "our father-confessor" several times in the "Teaching of Máel-Rúain".<sup>77</sup> The first recorded death of an anchorite at Iona in 752 may indicate that Iona continued to be involved in the developing reform movement after the death of Cú-chuimne.<sup>78</sup> Cú-chuimne's hymn to the Virgin was sung by Máel-Rúain and in the observances of the Céilí Dé.<sup>79</sup>

Contact between Iona and Tallaght is reflected by the "Monastery of Tallaght", which contains an anecdote about an unnamed abbot of Iona who surreptitiously added butter to the pottage consumed by the sickly penitents of Iona and mentions abbot Diarmait of Iona and his contemporary Blathmacc, who was martyred by Vikings in 825.<sup>80</sup> Other evidence reveals an interest at Tallaght in ecclesiastical affairs in the West Highlands and Islands before the arrival of the Vikings. The late eighth-century Martyrology of Tallaght and the c. 800 Martyrology of Oengus, both compiled at Tallaght, list the feast days of Moluag of Lismore, Maelrubai of Applecross, Columba, and abbots Baíthíne, Laisren, Fergna, Ségéne, Cumíne, Failbe, Adomán, and Dúnchad of Iona. The Martyrology of Tallaght alone includes Suibne the sixth abbot, Adomán's successor Connamail and abbot Cillíne, who died in 726, according to the Annals of Tigernach.<sup>81</sup> Cillíne's predecessor Faelchú may be listed as one of two clerics of that name in Tallaght, although neither is clearly linked to Iona.<sup>82</sup> Neither martyrology lists abbot Sléibíne of Iona, who died in 767, but abbot Suibne, who died in 772, is included in Tallaght, which also lists

abbot Eochaid of Moluag's Lismore, Beccán of Rum, who died in 677, and three religious of Eigg of whom nothing else is known: Conán, Berchán and Enán.<sup>83</sup>

Iona recovered its prestige in Ireland in the eighth century. Adomnán's relics were taken to Ireland when his Law was renewed in 727 and returned in 730.<sup>84</sup> The Law of Columba was proclaimed in 753 by the Irish high-king Domnall of Meath and promulgated anew by abbot Sléibíne of Iona in 757 and in 778 by abbot Bresal and the high-king Donnchad, son of Domnall of Meath.<sup>85</sup> The Law of Columba is one of a group of eighth-century Laws whose text does not survive, but which was enacted both for the benefit of society and for the tribute it earned for the monastery in which it originated.<sup>86</sup> The active part played by two Irish high-kings in the promulgation of the Law of Columba in the second half of the eighth century shows that Iona had regained any prestige lost as a result of the Easter controversy. According to late sources, Domnall of Meath died at Iona in 763 and his successor as high-king, Niall Frossach, retired to Iona in 770 and died there in 778.<sup>87</sup> The Annals of Ulster record the pilgrimage to Iona of Artgal mac Cathail, king of Connacht, and his death at Iona in 791.<sup>88</sup>

Iona also enjoyed contact with Northumbria in the eighth century. Ecgberct of Iona was in touch with the Lindisfarne paruchia, possibly while he was at Iona. In the early ninth-century De Abbatibus, Aethelwulf informs us that Earmund, who seems to have been the founder of the Lindisfarne cell to which Aethelwulf belonged, sent to Ecgberct for an altar and for advice on monastic education and the proper site for a church.<sup>89</sup> Dr. Kirby points out that Bede's information about Ecgberct can only have come from Iona,<sup>90</sup> although it may have travelled indirectly, perhaps by way of Pictland. Ecgberct's stay at

Iona may also explain the interest taken in Northumbrian royalty by the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach, which report the death of king Oswiu's daughter Aelfflaed at Whitby in 713, the death of king Osred son of Aldfrith in 716, and the death of king Coenred in 718, although Ecgberct died in 729 and could not have been responsible for the entries noting the imprisonment of king Ceolwulf, Bede's patron, in 731.<sup>91</sup> Ceolwulf's retirement to Lindisfarne in 737, rather than Jarrow, and the rare privilege of a Gaelic name, Eochaid, suggest to Kirby that Ceolwulf may have been sympathetic to, and in contact with Dál Riata.<sup>92</sup> In any event, Iona remained in touch with Northumbrian monasteries after the death of Ecgberct and the abdication of Ceolwulf. The lost Chartres manuscript of the Historia Brittonum noted that abbot Sléibíne of Iona discovered the date of the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain when he visited Wilfrid's old monastery at Ripon, probably in 753, which may have been the first year of Sléibíne's abbacy.<sup>93</sup>

### Iona and the Annals

Iona's role in the development of the earliest Irish annals was first recognized by Professors Eóin MacNeill and T. F. O'Rahilly. The earliest stratum in the extant Irish annals depends upon a common source, which MacNeill dated to c. 712 and called the "Old-Irish Chronicle". O'Rahilly dubbed it the "Ulster Chronicle", dating it to c. 740. Both MacNeill and O'Rahilly placed its original compilation in Bangor and recognized that it made use of a chronicle that had been kept at Iona.<sup>94</sup> Dr. Isabel Henderson supports the existence of an Iona record, which was used by the compiler of the "Old-Irish" or "Ulster Chronicle" in the mid-eighth century, following O'Rahilly's dating, in view of the full series of obits of Pictish kings that

begins in the annals with the death of Columba's contemporary Bruide son of Maelchú and reports of conflicts between Dál Riata and the Picts, from the late sixth to the mid-eighth century, which show a Dalriadic bias.<sup>95</sup> MacNeill, O'Rahilly and Henderson draw a distinction between the retrospective nature of entries describing events which took place before the compilation of the common source for the extant annals, and the subsequent listing of contemporary events made after the initial compilation. All are agreed that an Iona source was available to the compiler.

The existence of the lost Iona Chronicle, its remains now embedded in the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of Tigernach, has been firmly established by Dr. John Bannerman.<sup>96</sup> The evidence includes six entries noting travel to and from Ireland between 670 and 730, which were written in Scotland; 23 entries mentioning Scottish fortresses between 638 and 736, when only three Irish forts are mentioned in the same period; a distinctive group of entries listing drownings and shipwrecks in Dál Riata and Pictland between 622 and 739, and another group of entries concerning prisoners taken in Scotland between 673 and 736, when there is virtually no interest in similar events in Ireland; a particularly full record of Iona abbots and events at Iona from Columba to the mid-eighth century; and five entries on the accession of Iona abbots between 707 and 724, a period when no abbatial successions are recorded in Ireland. Bannerman identifies a group of precisely dated entries on Pictish and Dalriadic events between 686 and 740 as contemporary entries. He also relates to Iona's interest in neighbouring kingdoms a group of 23 references to Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, entered between 613 and 731, excluding those which bring them into contact with the Picts, Scots or Irish, and another group of ten references to British kingdoms in Wales and southwest Scotland

between 613 and 722. Precisely dated entries on events in Scotland end in 740 and all entries on Dál Riata, Pictland and the Anglo-Saxon and British kingdoms dwindle rapidly after 740. Bannerman therefore concludes that the Iona Chronicle, which was a contemporary record of events at least between 686 and 740, was removed to Ulster c. 740 and put to use at Bangor. The Pictish conquest of Dál Riata between 736 and 741 provides the reason for its removal.

Kathleen Hughes endorsed Bannerman's case for an Iona Chronicle and proposed that there may have been an Iona Chronicle after 585, although she attributed the development of annal-writing at Iona to Adomnán.<sup>97</sup> If annal-writing as such began at Iona with Adomnán, then the Iona Chronicle must have taken some other form between 585 and Adomnán's tenure at Iona. Plummer and O'Rahilly suggested that annals began as marginal entries in the Tables used to determine the date of Easter.<sup>98</sup> Noting the pride Columbanus took in the computistical skill of monasteries which used the old 84-year Easter Tables, such as Iona and Columbanus's own Bangor, Professor Byrne has suggested that annotated Easter Tables, or paschal annals, are more likely to have developed in the northern centres than in the south of Ireland, which had conformed to Rome c. 632 and displays a distinct lack of interest in annalistic records in the period under review. Byrne further suggests that the earliest Irish annals were written at Iona and that annal entries become contemporary in the second half of the sixth century.<sup>99</sup> An early link between annal-writing and Easter Tables is more likely to have existed at Iona than in the south of Ireland. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has shown that the south of Ireland had developed an interest in computistics by the mid-seventh century,<sup>100</sup> but Leinster had no independent annals of its own before the late eighth century, nor do the Annals of Inisfallen become a predominantly 'Munster



Chronicle" until c. 790.<sup>101</sup>

In view of the bias towards the northeastern Gaelic world evident in the extant annals from the mid-sixth century to c. 740, Alfred Smyth dates the earliest contemporary annal entries at Iona to Columba's lifetime. Smyth also attributes the development of annal-writing to the annotation of Easter Tables at Iona.<sup>102</sup> David Dumville and Kenneth Harrison agree that annal-writing began in the mid-sixth century, although Harrison believes that some of the cosmic phenomena noted in the annals would have been better observed further south than Iona.<sup>103</sup> Marjorie Anderson has suggested Bangor and Clonmacnoise as possible annal-writing centres in the eighth century.<sup>104</sup> Smyth and Mac Niocaill, however, reject an independent Bangor Chronicle before c. 740. O'Rahilly noted that Scottish events are granted pride of place in the extant annals until c. 737, which Smyth argues would hardly have been the case had Bangor had a set of annals of its own, although Smyth places the compilation of the exemplar for the surviving annals at Bangor in 740.<sup>105</sup> Smyth argues against annal-writing at Clonmacnoise before c. 800 and derives the obits of Clonmacnoise abbots in the annals from an abbatial list rather than an independent set of Clonmacnoise annals.<sup>106</sup>

At any rate, Iona seems to have been the major annal-writing centre in the Gaelic world before 740, whether the annotation of Easter Tables began at Iona with Columba or not until Adomnán. The separate set of paschal annals which may have been kept at Applecross<sup>107</sup> comes to an end at the same time as the original Iona Chronicle and both may have been removed to Bangor c. 740 for the same reason: the Pictish conquest of Dál Riata. The fears that led to the removal of the Iona Chronicle were apparently unfounded. Annal-writing, presumably based on a lost parent copy of the Iona Chronicle, continued

at Iona after 740. Ó Cróinín suggests that the compilation which informs the extant annals may have been made at Iona c. 750 under abbot Sléibíne, who travelled to Ripon to discover the date of the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain,<sup>108</sup> but the c. 750 date does not accord with the paucity of Dalriadic and Pictish information after 740. Sléibíne's journey to Ripon does show, however, that retrospective entries were being made in a set of annals kept at Iona after 740. The annals written at Iona after 740 were lost, most likely as a result of the Viking attacks on Iona.<sup>109</sup>

### The Viking Attacks

The Annals of Ulster record the uastatio omnium insularum Britanniae a gentilibus in 794 and attacks on Rathlin and Skye in 795. The Annals of Inisfallen, in a possibly contemporary entry, report the assaults on Iona, Inishmurray and Inishboffin in 795.<sup>110</sup> The Vikings burned Iona in 802 and slaughtered 68 members of the familia of Iona in 806.<sup>111</sup> Construction of a new "monastery of Columba" began at Kells in County Meath in 807 and was completed in 814 by Cellach mac Congaile, who resigned the principatus and, according to a late source, returned to Iona.<sup>112</sup> The Annals of Ulster describe Cellach as abbas Iae at his death in 815.<sup>113</sup>

The Columban community was concentrated at Kells by 814, although a reduced establishment was maintained at Iona thereafter. Cellach's successor Diarmait seems to have spent most of his time in Ireland and is associated in Célí Dé texts with Blathmacc mac Flainn, as we have seen. The first journey by Diarmait to Scotland is recorded in 818<sup>114</sup> when Diarmait may have installed Blathmacc as his deputy at Iona, where Blathmacc seems to have been in charge at his death in 825. According to a poem by Walafrid Strabo, who died in 849 as abbot of Reichenau, a

monastery with links to the Gaelic world, Blathmacc went to Iona secure in the knowledge that there he would achieve martyrdom. Blathmacc hid a reliquary containing the bones of Columba, refused to divulge its whereabouts to a band of marauding Vikings, and was duly "torn limb from limb".<sup>115</sup> Iona appears only intermittently in the annals after the martyrdom of Blathmacc. Abbot Diarmait brought relics of Columba to Scotland in 829 and took them back to Ireland in 831.<sup>116</sup> Vikings stole the "shrine" of Adomnán in 832 from Donaghmoyne in County Monahan, where it seems to have been in the care of the abbot of Rathlin and Durrow.<sup>117</sup> Abbot Indrechtach of Iona took relics of Columba to Ireland in 849 and was killed by "Saxons" while on his way to Rome in 854.<sup>118</sup> There may have been a division of the relics of Columba between Kells and Dunkeld in 849. Constantine son of Fergus "built Dunkeld", presumably a church or monastery, according to several versions of the Pictish and Dalriadic kings' lists.<sup>119</sup> Constantine, whose father seems to have been the Dalriadic king Fergus son of Eochaid who died in 781, became king of the Picts c. 789 and also served as king of Dál Riata from c. 811 to his death in 820.<sup>120</sup> The Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton Manuscript states that Kenneth mac Alpin transferred relics of Columba to a church he built, thought to be at Dunkeld, in the seventh year of his reign, c. 848-9.<sup>121</sup> If so, Kenneth's church may have been an addition to the establishment founded by Constantine son of Fergus. The Annals of Ulster record the death in 865 of Tuathal son of Artgus, abbot of Dunkeld and "chief bishop" of the old Pictish kingdom or sub-kingdom of Fortriu; and that of Cellach son of Ailill, who is styled both abbot of Iona and abbot of Kildare and is said to have died in regione Pictorum.<sup>122</sup> The "shrine" and other relics of Columba were taken to Ireland, perhaps from Dunkeld, "to escape the foreigners" in 878, at a time when the old Pictish heartland east of

### Summary

Iona, before the Vikings, was in a position to influence and be affected by artistic developments in Ireland, Pictland and Northumbria. Iona may have suffered the loss of some prestige in Ireland as a result of the Easter controversy, but Adomnán's relics, presumably housed in a reliquary made at Iona, were taken to Ireland for the renewal of Cáin Adomnáin in 727 and two Irish high-kings promulgated the Law of Columba in the second half of the eighth century. Contact between Iona and Pictland may have been encouraged by Ecgberct after Nechtan's expulsion of recalcitrant Iona monks in 717 and Pictish matters continue to be reported in the Iona Chronicle until it was transferred to Ireland c. 740, when the Picts overran Dál Riata. The Iona foundation at Lindisfarne enjoyed the patronage of king Oswald of Northumbria, who beheld Columba in a vision. Adomnán's journeys to Northumbria, where he met Ceolfrith at Jarrow and presented a copy of De Locis Sanctis to king Aldfrith, are likely to have entailed the formal exchange of gifts and took place between the Synod of Whitby and Iona's conformity to Rome. The Iona Chronicle took an interest in the family of king Ceolwulf of Northumbria, who might have had some contact with Dál Riata between his accession in 718 and his abdication and retirement to Lindisfarne in 737. The Lindisfarne paruchia was in touch with Ecgberct, possibly while he was at Iona. The annalistic record of contact between Iona and Northumbria ends with the loss of the Iona Chronicle to Bangor c. 740, but abbot Sléibíne of Iona visited Ripon, probably in 753.

Iona made a substantial, often original contribution to the development of Gaelic monasticism. Cumíne's Liber de virtutibus and

Adomnán's Life of Columba belong to the earliest phase of Gaelic hagiography. The success of Cáin Adomnáin led to a spate of laws originating in Gaelic monasteries, including Iona's own Law of Columba. Iona played a major, perhaps central role in the development of annal-writing in Gaelic monasteries. Adomnán's writings reveal something of the extent of the Iona library, which, although not as well-stocked as that of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, seems to have determined the intellectual tone at Lindisfarne c. 700. Columba and Cú-chuimne wrote hymns at Iona and Cú-chuimne's work on the Collectio Canonum Hibernensis formed an integral part of the eighth-century monastic reform that culminated in the Céilí Dé. Iona was intellectually well-equipped enough, and had sufficient contact with monastic centres throughout northern Britain and Ireland, to have been able to provide a milieu conducive to the creation of original works of art.

#### The Development of Relief Sculpture in Northumbria and Pictland

The sculptural contribution of the Iona School to Insular art was made against the background of the earlier relief sculpture of Northumbria and Pictland. Early medieval Insular relief sculpture first appeared in the last quarter of the seventh century in Northumbria, where it was followed by memorial cross slabs carved in relief. The transition in Pictland from the incised symbol stones of Class I to the cross-decorated relief slabs of Class II followed in the wake of the introduction of stone ecclesiastical architecture from Northumbria under king Nechtan. Free-standing stone crosses appeared in Northumbria by c. 740.

#### Northumbria

The first stone church in Northumbria was built at the suggestion

of bishop Paulinus of York but relief sculpture seems to have first appeared in a Northumbrian architectural setting under the eyes of Wilfrid, Tatberht and Acca, and those of Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrith. Paulinus baptized king Edwin of Northumbria at York in 627 in a church dedicated to St. Peter, built in wood and later encased in stone, although work on the stone church was not completed until the reign of Edwin's successor Oswald.<sup>124</sup> Edwin's head was placed on the altar after his death in 632 at the battle of Hatfield, where he was overthrown by Cadwallon of Gwynedd and Penda of Mercia. Paulinus fled to Rochester and left the deacon James in charge at York.<sup>125</sup> The stone church at York had no influence on the Iona foundation at Lindisfarne, where the monastic buildings were constructed in wood with thatched roofs, in the Gaelic fashion.<sup>126</sup>

Relief sculpture was first applied to ecclesiastical architecture in Northumbria under the influence of Wilfrid at Ripon and Hexham and Benedict Biscop at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. Wilfrid, who began his ecclesiastical career at Lindisfarne, and the elder Biscop travelled together in 653 from Canterbury to Lyons, where Wilfrid remained for a year while Biscop went on to Rome. Wilfrid subsequently received instructions in Rome from archdeacon Boniface, then spent another three years at Lyons until archbishop Annemundus was killed in a palace revolt. Alchfrith son of Oswiu, sub-king of Deira, had given a monastery at Ripon to opponents of the Roman Easter from Melrose, including Cuthbert, but they withdrew when Alchfrith granted Ripon instead to Wilfrid, after Wilfrid returned to Northumbria and was ordained priest c. 663 by Agilberht, bishop of the West Saxons. Wilfrid then served as spokesman for the Roman party at the Synod of Whitby.<sup>127</sup> Benedict Biscop visited seventeen monasteries in Italy and Gaul between 654 and 665 and then spent two years at Lérins, where he was tonsured during the period when



abbot Aigulf introduced a mixed Benedictine-Columbanian rule, which favoured coenobitic or communal life at the expense of the eremitic. Biscop was in Rome when Pope Vitalian consecrated Theodore of Tarsus as archbishop of Canterbury in 668. At the urging of the Pope, Biscop returned to England with Theodore, passing some time on the way with Agilberht, who had ordained Wilfrid and was now bishop of Paris, before arriving at Canterbury in 671. Biscop founded the Monkwearmouth monastery in 674 on land granted by Ecgfrith of Northumbria.<sup>128</sup>

Impressed by the stone churches they had seen on the Continent, Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop strove to achieve a similar effect on their fellow Northumbrians. Wilfrid created the desired impression on his biographer Eddius Stephanus, who described Wilfrid's restoration of Paulinus's stone church at York between 669 and 671; the construction at Ripon of a basilican church in dressed stone with side aisles, its roof supported by columns, built between 671 and 678; and the basilica Wilfrid designed and built at Hexham between 672 and 678, whose crypts, columns, high walls, side aisles, and winding staircases Eddius hailed as the finest north of the Alps.<sup>129</sup> Wilfrid had been consecrated bishop in Gaul following the Synod of Whitby, but during his absence his patron Alchfrith of Deira failed in rebellion against Oswiu, who appointed Chad bishop in place of Wilfrid. Until his restoration by archbishop Theodore in 669, Wilfrid founded monasteries in Mercia and ordained priests in Kent. Eddius informs us that Wilfrid brought masons and artisans with him when he returned to Northumbria to reclaim his bishopric.<sup>130</sup> We learn from Bede's Historia Abbatum that Benedict Biscop found masons in Gaul in 675 for the building of Monkwearmouth and the Life of Ceolfrith further informs us that they were sent at Biscop's request by abbot Torhthelm, whose name appears to be Anglo-Saxon, but Torhthelm's Gaulish monastery remains unidentified.<sup>131</sup>

Following the construction of Monkwearmouth, Biscop made yet another trip to Rome where, perhaps mindful of Wilfrid's difficulties, he obtained special privileges for his foundation from Pope Agatho.<sup>132</sup> Back in Northumbria, Biscop founded a companion monastery for Monkwearmouth at nearby Jarrow c. 682, which was also built in stone and dedicated in 685 under abbot Ceolfrith, probably while Biscop was off again to Rome.<sup>133</sup>

The early written sources do not make it clear whether relief sculpture was included in the original buildings at Ripon, Hexham, Monkwearmouth, or Jarrow, although it would not have been out of place among the furnishings described in the pages of Eddius Stephanus, Bede or the Life of Ceolfrith. Professor Cramp tentatively identifies as an altar pillar a stone "which had been used as a step into the crypt" at Ripon. Its decoration includes "cut circles" which Cramp relates to a Visigothic altar pillar from Cordoba,<sup>134</sup> although the Ripon stone does not reflect the influence of chip-carved metalwork as clearly as does the Cordoba altar. The cut circles motif was also carved on a broken ornamental panel at Jarrow, which Cramp dates to the late seventh or early eighth century, and appears on an animal impost at Hexham which Cramp dates to the last quarter of the seventh or the first quarter of the eighth century.<sup>135</sup> The Ripon pillar could be either Roman or "early Saxon".<sup>136</sup> The cut circles motif was Mediterranean in origin and appeared in more developed form on the ten silver bowls in the Sutton Hoo treasure,<sup>137</sup> but the zig-zag decoration seen on the Ripon altar pillar is also found on a cross-arm fragment at Jarrow, dated by Cramp to the first half of the eighth century, a cross-head fragment at Ripon and on the probably eighth-century Ripon school cross head from Northallerton, all of which suggest indigenous metalwork prototypes.<sup>138</sup> The Ripon pillar may belong to Wilfrid's life-

time but two interlace-decorated imposts at Ripon, which Cramp relates to an eighth-century Monkwearmouth fragment,<sup>139</sup> are perhaps more likely to belong to the period of Tatberht, Wilfrid's successor at Ripon. Wilfrid's Romanizing taste in church organization and architecture is overshadowed in the earliest Ripon sculpture by a predilection for Insular ornament which, Cramp suggests, may owe something to Wilfrid's anti-Roman predecessors at Ripon.<sup>140</sup> Henry Mayr-Harting points out that Wilfrid himself bore no ill-will towards Lindisfarne after the Synod of Whitby and draws attention to Bede's account of Willibrord regaling Wilfrid and Acca in Frisia with an account of a miracle effected by a relic of Oswald, Lindisfarne's original patron.<sup>141</sup> It was at Lindisfarne, after all, that Wilfrid first decided to visit Rome and was encouraged to do so by the brethren there.<sup>142</sup>

Surviving sculpture is more "austerely Roman" at Hexham,<sup>143</sup> where Romanization held sway over Insular decoration. Indeed, the rosette carved on a sandstone panel with a few fragments of a putti-inhabited vinescroll composition may be Roman work re-used by Wilfrid.<sup>144</sup> Cramp dates to the last quarter of the seventh century eight fragments of a Crucifixion panel at Hexham, which depicted Christ in relief, clad in a long colobium and attended by angels. Traces of gesso indicate that the panel was painted. The drapery and modelling of the figure reflect Mediterranean influence, although the cross shape is of an Insular type seen in the Durham A.II.17 Crucifixion miniature.<sup>145</sup> The head and upper body of a fish on another Hexham fragment suggest Gaulish connexions. Similar creatures are carved on a step in the Poitiers hypogeum. The herringbone decoration on the body of the Hexham fish is also found on two baluster imposts at Hexham.<sup>146</sup> Cramp dates to the seventh century the Hexham "frith stool", a stone seat whose decoration has a classical restraint.<sup>147</sup> For the most part,

however, a confident classicism does not appear in sculpture at Hexham until the emergence there of the free-standing sculptured stone cross, discussed below, a phenomenon likely to have occurred late in the life of Acca, who succeeded Wilfrid as bishop of Hexham in 709, was deposed in 732 and died in 740.<sup>148</sup> The naturalism of a cow and boar carved on two impost blocks or frieze fragments at Hexham, both with an undercoat for paint, reflects the late classical tradition and dates from the time of Wilfrid or Acca, but the now headless lion on another Hexham fragment, dated by Cramp to the first half of the eighth century, is comparable to the Lion symbols in the Lichfield and Echternach Gospels and reflects a more Insular taste.<sup>149</sup> The native tradition was also given rein in stone at Hexham in Wilfrid's or Acca's day in the fine interlace pattern on a shaft or pilaster now lost.<sup>150</sup> Cramp dates to the last quarter of the seventh century or the first quarter of the eighth an impost block or capital at Hexham whose chequers and cable mouldings are "Italianate in taste" although its "idiosyncratic scheme" is Anglo-Saxon.<sup>151</sup> The earliest sculpture at both Ripon and Hexham accommodates Wilfrid's Northumbrian origins while echoing his Roman victory at Whitby.

The earliest relief sculpture at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow also pays tribute to indigenous Anglo-Saxon ornament as well as Benedict Biscop's Romanization policy. Two sandstone lions at Monkwearmouth are carved with "an understanding of the canons of Classical sculpture, unique in Northumbrian work" and may have been sculpted by the artisans Biscop imported from Gaul. Professor Cramp identifies one of the lions, which is provided with an architectural setting of columns with capitals and bases, as an arm of the abbot's seat and the other lion as an "arm-end of the clergy bench".<sup>152</sup> Cramp dates to the late seventh or early eighth century a possible pilaster capital excavated at Monkwearmouth,

which seems to imitate an antique Ionic capital.<sup>153</sup> The standing human figure thought to have been carved in relief on four large blocks still in situ on the west face of the tower of St. Peter's church at Monkwearmouth is now virtually unrecognizable, but may have formed part of the secondary west porch, which was constructed by 686.<sup>154</sup>

Other early sculpture at Monkwearmouth would have appealed more to native taste. The two sandstone door jambs on either side of the entrance of the secondary west porch each feature a pair of long-beaked, fish-tailed creatures with interlaced jaws, whose heads follow in an Anglo-Saxon tradition, although their entwined tails are comparable to Aquitanian animal ornament.<sup>155</sup> The long beak of another beast appears on an interlace-decorated fragment found at Monkwearmouth in the last century. Elizabeth Coatsworth's identification of the remaining bits of the creature's anatomy as the body and hind legs of a tail-less quadruped clasped in its own jaws or, possibly, those of a second animal, is perhaps preferable to Cramp's reading of a legless beast with thickened body and slender tail. Both Cramp and Coatsworth recognize the affinities of the panel fragment to manuscript illumination and Coatsworth places the animal midway in the line of development between the animal interlace patterns in the Book of Durrow and those in Durham A.II.17. Cramp dates it to the last quarter of the seventh century or the first quarter of the eighth.<sup>156</sup> Anglo-Saxon ornament on other surviving sculpture at Monkwearmouth mostly takes the form of linear interlace patterns. Cramp dates to the last quarter of the seventh century five fragments of possible architectural fittings featuring interlace designs.<sup>157</sup> The native tradition is noticeably apparent at Monkwearmouth in a probably eighth century animal-head terminal which probably belonged to a piece of furniture.<sup>158</sup>

Anglo-Saxon stonecarvers at Ripon, Hexham and Monkwearmouth seem

to have begun sculpting architectural ornament decorated with the comfortable patterns already known to them in other media, almost as soon as they had mastered the techniques of carving in relief. At Benedict Biscop's second foundation at Jarrow, however, relief sculpture was resolutely Romanizing from the first. John Higgitt has established that even the incised letters of the Jarrow dedication inscription carved in 685 have "no exclusively Insular forms".<sup>159</sup> The inhabited vinescrolls on two possible frieze fragments at Jarrow, dated by Cramp to the early eighth century, are carved in high relief and clearly derive from the classical tradition. One features two birds, the other a "hunter", but similarities between their vinescrolls suggest that both may originally have belonged to the same composition.<sup>160</sup> Classicizing foliate ornament also appears on fragments of an octagonal shaft whose base was embedded in the floor of a building that may have been the monastery's first refectory. As such, the shaft is unlikely to be much later than the late seventh century. The interlace patterns on the shaft mark a concession to native taste.<sup>161</sup> The head and elongated neck of a bird excavated in separate pieces at Jarrow probably belonged to a relief carving, possibly an inhabited vinescroll, although the length of the neck and the form of the beak recall the birds in the Lindisfarne Gospels.<sup>162</sup>

The efforts of Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop to bring the church in Northumbria more firmly within the Roman orbit in the aftermath of the Synod of Whitby are reflected in the Ripon altar pillar, the Hexham Crucifixion panel, the Monkwearmouth lions, and the inhabited vinescrolls at Jarrow, but Anglo-Saxon stonecarvers in Northumbria also carved more familiar native decoration in relief in the late seventh and early eighth century. The juxtaposition of Anglo-Saxon and classicizing styles of relief sculpture at Wilfrid's and Benedict



Biscop's foundations echoes the two rival traditions of manuscript illumination in Northumbria in the late seventh and early eighth century detected by Professor Julian Brown and Dr. Bruce-Mitford: the native Insular tradition represented by Durham A.II.17 and the Italian tradition exemplified by the Codex Amiatinus.<sup>163</sup> The Lindisfarne Gospels stand somewhere between the two, but Lindisfarne played no part in the sculptural revolution initiated by Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop.

### Relief Cross Slabs in Northumbria

Lindisfarne, however, served as a centre for the production of incised, inscribed, cross-decorated name-stones, but inscribed slabs with crosses carved in relief were developed at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow in the early eighth century. A fragment of an incised name-stone at Monkwearmouth shows that the type was known at Biscop's first foundation. Cramp dates it in the last quarter of the seventh or the first quarter of the eighth century, although Higgitt suggests a date in the second half of the eighth century and Okasha dates it to the eighth or ninth.<sup>164</sup> The two inscriptions on the stone, one runic, the other in Latin letters, could, however, be later than the original preparation of the slab.<sup>165</sup> Name-stones in general may reflect Gaulish influence and both Monkwearmouth and Hartlepool, where a number of name-stones have been found, had Gaulish connexions.<sup>166</sup> The Monkwearmouth and Jarrow relief cross slabs are typologically later than incised name-stones, but there was probably an overlap period when both types could have been carved at the same site.

Relief cross slabs used as either architectural features or burial markers appeared in Northumbria in the late seventh or early eighth century, the date range Cramp assigns a fragment of a slab at Jarrow

with traces of an inscription and the lower part of a cross shaft in relief.<sup>167</sup> The upper part of the surviving cross shaft has a rectangular expansion and the extension at the foot is rounded at the top and squared at the bottom. Similar forms are found in the Lindisfarne Gospels and Higginth suggests a date for the Jarrow fragment in the early eighth century.<sup>168</sup>

Substantial areas of the inscriptions survive on the two most important Northumbrian relief cross slabs, one at Jarrow, the other at Monkwearmouth. The HEREBERICH slab at Monkwearmouth survives in one piece but is damaged at the top and bottom and along one side.<sup>169</sup> The Jarrow slab originally comprised three re-used Roman stones. The top arm of the cross was carved on a stone now lost. The central block, including the transom of the cross, has traces of a Roman inscription on the top edge.<sup>170</sup> The relief cross on the HEREBERICH slab has rectangular expansions at the base and at the ends of its three arms, but none at the centre. The relief cross on the Jarrow slab has rectangular expansions at the centre, at the ends of the surviving side arms and on the upper part of the shaft below the transom. The base of the shaft is an extended version of the type found on the cross shaft carved in relief on the smaller Jarrow fragment described above and also depends upon manuscript sources.<sup>171</sup> Cramp describes the HEREBERICH slab as a "much more assured carving than the Jarrow slab", and was once prepared to date the HEREBERICH stone earlier, but she now assigns the Jarrow slab to the late seventh or early eighth century and the HEREBERICH monument to the first quarter of the eighth century.<sup>172</sup> Levison established that the inscription on the Jarrow slab, now partly defaced, was In hoc signo vita redditur mundo and that its first four words are taken from the Latin version of the inscription on the statue erected in honour of Constantine's vision before his

victory at the Milvian Bridge, which is given in Rufinus's translation of Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, a work known to Bede.<sup>173</sup> Cramp suggests that the slab, now built into the wall of the porch of St. Paul's church, Jarrow, may have been an original feature of the monastic church.<sup>174</sup> Higgitt, however, relates the inscription to the return from Rome after 701 of Hwaetberht, who succeeded Ceolfrith in the abbacy in 716 and was also known by the monastic nickname of Eusebius, which suggests that Hwaetberht's probable interest in Rufinus's text of Eusebius may account for the Jarrow inscription.<sup>175</sup> The inscription on the Monkwearmouth slab reads Hic in sepulchro requiescit corpore Herebericht pr̄b and the last line has been altered to give Herebricht's name instead of the name originally carved on the stone. The rest of the inscription is original and appears to derive from the epitaph inscribed over Wilfrid's tomb at Ripon, which is recorded by Bede. Higgitt therefore dates the original carving of the HEREBERIGHT slab after 709 and suggests that Ceolfrith or Hwaetberht may have commissioned it shortly thereafter as a memorial for abbots Eosterwine or Sigfrid of Monkwearmouth, whose remains were translated in 716, which would then have left the slab free for re-use.<sup>176</sup> It is clear that the relief cross slab had emerged as a distinctive form of Northumbrian monument by the early eighth century.

### Early Pictish Class II Cross Slabs

In addition to the Pictish symbols already in use in Pictland, the essential components necessary to the production of Pictish Class II cross slabs were available in Northumbria in the early eighth century: relief cross slabs and sculptural ornament carved in relief. The stones used for Class I monuments in the Pictish heartland, such as Aberlemno No. 1 and the Dunnichen stone, were chosen for having one side smooth

enough to display incised symbols to advantage,<sup>177</sup> but were otherwise left unshaped and undressed. The techniques of relief carving and stone cutting entered Pictland with the masons Ceolfrith sent to king Nechtan from Jarrow.

Nechtán came to the throne in 706 and put down a revolt in 713.<sup>178</sup> Dissension within his own kingdom eventually led to civil war between 726 and 729 and the emergence of Oengus son of Fergus as king of the Picts.<sup>179</sup> Nechtán also had to contend with a resurgent Northumbria in the early years of his reign. In 711 the Northumbrian ealdorman Berhtfrith defeated a Pictish army near Falkirk.<sup>180</sup> The Northumbrians seem to have had internal problems of their own at the time. King Aldfrith was briefly succeeded after his death in 705 by Eadwulf, who was driven out by Berhtfrith and replaced by Aldfrith's young son Osred, who was murdered in 716.<sup>181</sup> Eadwulf had turned against Wilfrid during his short reign but Berhtfrith, acting as Osred's adviser, supported Wilfrid at the synod held on the river Nidd in Yorkshire in 706.<sup>182</sup> The Berhtfrith who supported the Romanizing Wilfrid was apparently the ealdorman who defeated the Picts in 711,<sup>183</sup> which suggests two possibilities in regard to the Picts. First, Berhtfrith may have been in a position to dictate terms to the Picts after his victory in 711, although there is no indication that it was Nechtán whom Berhtfrith defeated. The annals merely record the death at the battle of 711 of Finguin son of Deleroith, of whom nothing else is known.<sup>184</sup> On the other hand, if the Picts whom Berhtfrith defeated were in rebellion against, or acting independently of Nechtán, Nechtán may have welcomed the opportunity to consolidate his control of Pictland with Northumbrian help. In either case, Nechtán's ecclesiastical rapprochement with Northumbria led to peace between the two kingdoms, which lasted until the early years of the reign of Oengus son of Fergus.<sup>185</sup>

Nechtan had apparently given the Easter controversy some thought before he sent to Jarrow for advice, perhaps due to the influence of Ecgberct. According to Bede, Nechtan already had a set of Roman Easter Tables when he wrote to Ceolfrith requesting convincing evidence to set before those who opposed the Roman Easter, as well as the loan of some stonemasons to build a church in the "Roman manner". Nechtan's expulsion of recalcitrant members of the familia of Iona in 717 reinforces the impression given by Bede that Nechtan's rule was strong enough at the time for him to have been able to impose the Roman Easter and tonsure throughout Pictland.<sup>186</sup> Nechtan's interest in ecclesiastical affairs may have led to his retirement to monastic life in 724, although it seems more likely that he was forced to do so, in view of his imprisonment by his successor Drust in 726, his resumption of the kingship in 727 and his final defeat by Oengus son of Fergus in 729.<sup>187</sup> Nechtan's imposition of Roman practices on the Pictish church appears to have occurred during the period of his greatest strength, between the unsuccessful revolt of 713 and the expulsion of the Iona monks in 717.

Alfred Smyth has attempted to minimize the effects of Nechtan's Romanization policy under Northumbrian auspices and sees it instead as a victory for Iona's own Roman party in Pictland.<sup>188</sup> Bruide son of Derile, Nechtan's predecessor and probable brother, supported Cáin Adomnáin in 697 and the discussion of Adomnán in Ceolfrith's letter would have special relevance if Nechtan was a known admirer of Adomnán's, as Smyth suggests, but Ceolfrith's expression of regret that Adomnán lacked sufficient authority to impose Roman observances on the familia of Iona may have been intended as subtle flattery for a king who had only recently consolidated control in his own kingdom.<sup>189</sup> It seems likely that there was a pro-Roman element in Pictish society

which would have been in sympathy with the Roman faction at Iona when Nechtan wrote to Jarrow, but Smyth's dismissal of the extent of Anglo-Saxon influence on Pictish Class II sculpture fails to convince.<sup>190</sup>

Smyth would derive the hunting scenes, anthromorphic figures and cross shapes seen in Pictish relief sculpture, as well as cross slabs themselves, from Irish monuments which, for the most part, may be later than the earliest Pictish Class II cross slabs. The relief cross slab was developed in Northumbria and the earliest Insular hunting scenes and anthromorphic figures were probably carved by Picts. Smyth is not wrong to tell us that "historical sources must point the way for the art historian, since artistic evidence alone is not sufficient in itself to show us the circumstances in which craftsmen and their patrons shared in the exchange of ideas",<sup>191</sup> but art history is not merely an adjunct to history. It is the task of the art historian to determine the nature of the exchange of artistic ideas on the basis of the art itself and only then to find, with the help of historians, the historical framework wherein that exchange is likely to have taken place.

It is not known for certain where Nechtan built his stone church, although it was probably south of the Mounth, where the earliest Class II slabs are found. Douglas Simpson would identify the ground floor of the tower of Restenneth Priory near Forfar as the porticus of the church commissioned by Nechtan and built in the "Roman" fashion, in view of similarities between its doorway arch and long-and-short masonry and related architectural features at Jarrow and Escomb.<sup>192</sup>

Richard Fawcett, however, relates the raised strip around the outside of the Restenneth doorway to that on the eleventh century round tower at Abernethy.<sup>193</sup> Bede tells us that Nechtan intended to dedicate his church to St. Peter but traditions conflict over whether the earliest



church at Restenneth was dedicated to Peter or the Holy Trinity.<sup>194</sup> Professor Barrow, however, suggests that a property near Restenneth, called Egglespether in a charter from the reign of Malcolm IV (1153-1165), may have been the site of Nechtan's church. Egglespether means "Peter's church" and includes the early Brittonic element eglēs, from Latin ecclesia.<sup>195</sup> Some of the earliest Pictish Class II slabs are found at sites in the neighbourhood. Aberlemno is about four miles northeast of Restenneth, Glamis about six miles to the southwest and Eassie about two miles west of Glamis.

The earliest Pictish Class II slabs are distinguished by their shallow relief and the facility with which Pictish sculptors adapted and improved upon the ornamental repertoire available in Insular art by the early eighth century. The decoration of the cross on Glamis No. 2 is carved in low relief but the outlines of the symbols in the lower right quadrant are incised and the outer edges of their forms bevelled, creating the false impression that they, too, are in relief.<sup>196</sup> Stevenson would assign the false relief horsemen and animals on the back of the Monifieth No. 3 fragment, the incised figures and symbols on the Fordoun cross slab and the false relief Pictish Beast and hunting scene on a slab at Scoonie in Fife to the earliest phase of Pictish Class II sculpture, although Scoonie "could be the work of an inferior sculptor".<sup>197</sup> The unique battle scene on the back of Aberlemno No. 2 is carved in low relief but the cross on the other side stands out in high relief against the slab.<sup>198</sup> The quality of the draughtmanship on the earliest Class II monuments suggests that there may have been a native Pictish pictorial tradition, other than the incised symbols and animals of Class I, which could have been practised on carved or wooden panels or tooled leather. The gradual technical transition from Class I to Class II also suggests that the Picts had a

thriving artisan class of their own, who could readily assimilate the techniques introduced by Ceolfrith's masons.<sup>199</sup>

The extent of the Northumbrian impetus towards the transition from Class I to Class II is particularly evident in one of two "bilingual" slabs at Glamis, which originally served as Class I symbol stones and subsequently had their opposite faces dressed and decorated with crosses carved in relief.<sup>200</sup> Romilly Allen and Mrs. Curle called attention to the biting, long-beaked interlaced serpentine creatures in the side arms and at the bottom of the top arm of the cross on Glamis No. 2 (pl. 30),<sup>201</sup> which may owe something to the Monkwearmouth door jamb figures. The cruciform breaks in the interlace patterns in the central roundel and on the shaft of the cross follow in a tradition established in manuscript illumination by the Book of Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels and Durham A.II.17.<sup>202</sup> The interlace roundels at the centres of the crosses on Glamis No. 2 and the Rossie Priory slab and on the cross shafts on Glamis No. 2, Aberlemno No. 2, Rossie Priory, the Eassie slab, the Strathmartine No. 5 fragment, and Meigle No. 1<sup>203</sup> descend from interlace roundels of the type seen in the Book of Durrow (fol. 85) and the Lindisfarne Gospels (fol. 94V), and in early relief sculpture at Monkwearmouth.<sup>204</sup> The scalloped constrictions of the arms of Glamis No. 2 are a compressed version of the Northumbrian type and may depend upon metalwork models, but the rectangular terminals of the Glamis cross reflect the influence of the Monkwearmouth-Jarrow cross slabs, crosses found in Hiberno-Saxon carpet pages, such as Durrow (fol. 1V) and Lindisfarne (fol. 2V),<sup>205</sup> or the rectangular terminals of the cross in the Durham A.II.17 Crucifixion miniature, the same form used for the Hexham Crucifixion panel. Stevenson suggests that the pedimented tops of Glamis No. 2 and Aberlemno No. 2 "may be the accidental result of the irregular top of incised monuments" adapted for

use as Class II slabs,<sup>206</sup> but a pedimented top is also seen on a Northumbrian incised cross slab from Coquet Island, dated by Cramp to the late seventh or early eighth century.<sup>207</sup>

Northumbrian influence is also suggested by other features of the early Pictish Class II slabs. The shafts of the crosses on Glamis No. 1, Eassie and the back of Rossie Priory are distinguished by an indentation of the width below the bottom arm of the cross head,<sup>208</sup> a feature derived from manuscripts and developed in sculpture on the Jarrow cross slabs. Dr. Judith Calvert suggests a relationship between the crosses on the Eassie slab and the Lindisfarne carpet page, fol. 26V.<sup>209</sup> Curle, Stevenson and Henderson have noted the connexion between the coiled long-necked animals to the left of the cross on Aberlemno No. 2 and those surrounding the cross on the same Lindisfarne carpet page.<sup>210</sup> Dr. Henderson relates the pair of interlaced, long-beaked biting beasts to the right of the Aberlemno cross shaft to the animals on the large Sutton Hoo gold buckle and the Monkwearmouth panel fragment discussed above, and identifies the animal on Strathmartine No. 5 as a less "archaic" version of the type.<sup>211</sup> The classical sources that lie behind the hippocamps to the bottom right of the Aberlemno cross shaft and the centaur to the right of the top arm of the cross on Glamis No. 2 may have passed from Northumbria to Pictland during the short life of the Anglo-Saxon bishopric established for the Picts under Trumwine at Abercorn between 681 and 685, or with Ceolfrith's masons.<sup>212</sup> The key patterns carved on the side arms of the cross on Aberlemno No. 2, on Strathmartine No. 5 and in the central roundels of the crosses on Glamis No. 1, Eassie and the cross on the back of Rossie Priory depend upon manuscript sources. Key patterns are also carved on the northernmost eighth-century Northumbrian crosses at Abercorn and Aberlady,<sup>213</sup> which may be later than the earliest Pictish

Class II slabs. Key patterns could have been used in decorated manuscripts taken to Pictland from Iona, but we cannot confidently attribute any illuminated manuscripts to Iona in the late seventh or early eighth centuries. The only details taken from the older Celtic enamelled metalwork tradition in the earliest Pictish cross slabs are the spiral-decorated roundels on Aberlemno No. 2 and, possibly, Meigle No. 1, although the latter is too worn for positive identification.<sup>214</sup> The influence of other media is suggested by the battle scene on the back of Aberlemno No. 2, which may depend upon a native tapestry industry, as Henderson suggests.<sup>215</sup>

Most of the crosses on the early Pictish cross slabs are provided with a ring, although the crosses on Glamis No. 1 and the back of Rossie Priory have none. All have rounded armpits. The characteristically Pictish quadrilobate ring, a form first identified by Stevenson,<sup>216</sup> first appears in somewhat tentative form on Glamis No. 2 (pl. 30). Romilly Allen decided that two quadrants of a ring were carved on the left side of the Glamis No. 2 cross, but none on the right.<sup>217</sup> Mrs. Curle, however, discovered that the cross had a complete ring, the quadrants on the right "indicated by lightly incised lines", which are now barely discernible.<sup>218</sup> The curve of the lower left quadrant would have provided for a circular ring had it been continued around the crossing, but the upper left quadrant bulges out slightly to meet the forelegs of the adjacent "lion". The relief rings of the crosses on Aberlemno No. 2, Eassie, the front of Rossie Priory, and Meigle No. 1 are, however, unmistakably quadrilobate. Stevenson traces the origins of the type to Anglo-Saxon metalwork and the comparison he makes between Pictish crosses with quadrilobate rings and St. Cuthbert's pectoral cross, which has a garnet set in a semicircular cell in each of its four armpits, is particularly apt.<sup>219</sup>

Bruce-Mitford suggests that the thin arms of St. Cuthbert's cross, which flare slightly at the ends, reflect the influence of crosses of arcs in the west,<sup>220</sup> of the type seen on the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn (fig. 12g) and the LAPIS ECHODI stone at Iona (fig. 11f), but the addition of garnets at the ampits are an Anglo-Saxon variation on the jewelled cross theme. It is even possible that the Picts saw Cuthbert wear it. Both Bede's Prose Life and the Anonymous Life of St. Cuthbert mention a voyage of Cuthbert's ad terram Pictorum while Cuthbert was prior of Melrose between 664 and c. 678.<sup>221</sup> Bruce-Mitford dates Cuthbert's cross between 640 and 670. It was probably interred with Cuthbert's remains in 687 and again at their translation in 698.<sup>222</sup>

The earliest Pictish Class II slabs were carved some time in the eighth century. Stevenson has consistently advocated a date in the second half of the eighth century for the early slabs, primarily because of his belief that the next stylistic change in Pictish relief sculpture took place c. 800 and that there are too few of the early slabs to spread out over almost the entire eighth century.<sup>223</sup> In support of his dating, Stevenson relates the axe-wielding centaur on Glamis No. 2 to similar creatures on late eighth century Anglo-Saxon coins,<sup>224</sup> but the Picts need not have been entirely dependent upon the Anglo-Saxons for classical motifs. One Fergustus, described both as Pictus and episcopus Scotiae, attended a church council in Rome in 721 in the company of Sedulius, an episcopus Britannie de genere Scottorum.<sup>225</sup>

Isabel Henderson sees the earliest Class II slabs as a direct consequence of Nechtan's importation of Northumbrian masons and relates the Pictish adoption of the cross slab form to the slightly earlier appearance of relief cross slabs at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow.<sup>226</sup> The sculptural evidence supports Henderson's dating. The long-beaked

serpents in the arms of the Glamis No. 2 cross and the interlaced, long-beaked quadrupeds to the right of the cross shaft on Aberlemno No. 2 follow in a sculptural tradition inaugurated at Monkwearmouth. The cross shafts on Glamis No. 1, Eassie and the back of Rossie Priory are Pictish versions of cross shafts carved on slabs at Jarrow. Linear interlace patterns were fully developed in Insular manuscripts by the end of the seventh century and had appeared on imposts at Ripon, a lost shaft or pillar at Hexham, a number of fragments at Monkwearmouth, and the octagonal shaft at Jarrow by the early eighth century. Romilly Allen described the interlace pattern on the cross shaft on Aberlemno No. 2 as "the most elaborate interlace pattern in sculptured stone-work that has come down to us"<sup>227</sup> and the remarkable ability with which Pictish artisans designed and executed linear interlace compositions strongly suggests that they were already doing so in other media. Key patterns first appear in an Insular context in manuscript illumination but the Picts were the first to carve them in stone. As soon as they had mastered the technical problems of relief sculpture, Pictish sculptors turned their attention to the production of Insular ornament, much as had Northumbrian sculptors before them at Ripon, Hexham and Monkwearmouth. The rapid development of Pictish relief sculpture may have taken place in the period of about a decade between Nechtan's letter to Ceolfrith and Nechtan's retirement to monastic life in 724. The unrest that troubled the beginning and end of Nechtan's reign is unlikely to have prevented such a development, when one considers that Northumbria had internal problems of its own during the reign of Aldfrith's successor Osred, while the progress of Northumbrian relief sculpture proceeded apace.



## The Development of Northumbrian Sculptured Stone Crosses

The first free-standing crosses erected in Northumbria were wooden. Bede relates that Oswald of Northumbria set up a cross just before the battle of Deniseburn, at a place later known as Heavenfield, which was still standing in Bede's day. The Heavenfield cross was "hastily" constructed and was subsequently neither carved nor decorated with metalwork, as Bede also recounts the miraculous properties of slivers taken from the cross.<sup>228</sup> Oswald's vision of Columba before the battle and Oswald's exile at Iona, where wooden crosses had been standing since Columba's day, place the Heavenfield cross in an Iona context.<sup>229</sup> Bede also mentions a cross erected by Cuthbert on Farne Island.<sup>230</sup> It, too, was probably made of wood.

Symeon of Durham, writing in the early twelfth century, describes three sculptured stone crosses set up in Northumbria c. 740. Two were set up over the grave of bishop Acca at Hexham, one at his head which bore an identifying inscription, the other at his feet.<sup>231</sup> The third was commissioned by bishop Aethelwold of Lindisfarne, who also died c. 740, to serve as his memorial after his death. It was later broken up by Vikings, repaired with lead, removed from Lindisfarne when its monks abandoned the island, and was standing at Durham in Symeon's day.<sup>232</sup>

Scholarly opinions differ on the dating of the earliest Northumbrian sculptured crosses but there is general agreement that a cross shaft at Hexham, the Ruthwell cross in Dumfriesshire and the Bewcastle cross shaft in Cumberland belong to the earliest phase of Northumbrian stone crosses. Two fragments of a cross shaft in Hexham abbey were identified in 1861 with the cross erected over the head of Acca's grave. Two other fragments of the same cross, the top of the shaft and the lower part of the bottom arm of the cross head, were found in

1870.<sup>233</sup> The decoration of the shaft originally consisted of continuous uninhabited vinescrolls. The inscription on the fourth side is now virtually illegible and cannot be used to link the cross convincingly with Acca, although the label "Acca's cross" is customarily used for the sake of convenience. Collingwood and, more recently, Cramp place it at the beginning of the Northumbrian series of free-standing sculptured stone crosses and Cramp dates it to the second quarter of the eighth century.<sup>234</sup> The delicacy of the vinescroll ornament is unique in Northumbria and appears to have depended on Middle Eastern models comparable, as Cramp has pointed out, to the mosaics and the repoussé bronze plates on the lintels and tie beams in the Dome of the Rock, built in Jerusalem in 691.<sup>235</sup> Cramp suggests that the vinescrolls on Acca's cross are "reminiscent of embossed metalwork" and later, somewhat heavier derivations of its uninhabited vinescrolls, arranged in medallions, appeared on a lost cross shaft at Lowther in Westmorland, a shaft fragment from Stamfordham in Northumberland and other fragments from Hexham.<sup>236</sup> The head of Acca's cross seems to have depended upon a different kind of metalwork precursor, described by Cramp as "inset with jewels and surmounted by filigree" and by Collingwood as a "wooden construction" decorated with metalwork appliqués.<sup>237</sup> The decoration of the surviving part of the cross head suggests the influence of native metalwork, an impression strengthened by the fine-line interlace of the vinescroll stems which separates the vinescroll ornament into medallions. A lost body of Anglo-Saxon metalwork dependent upon Middle Eastern models may therefore have formed an intermediary stage between the arrival of the models in Northumbria and the carving of Acca's cross.

In contrast to Acca's cross, the continuous vinescrolls on one face of the Bewcastle cross shaft and two sides of the Ruthwell cross

shaft are inhabited and the decoration of the remaining faces of both shafts is divided into panels. Cramp has detected similarities between the birds and foliage on the two Jarrow frieze fragments discussed above and the inhabited vinescrolls on the Bewcastle and Ruthwell crosses, as well as a link between the "gripping beasts" on the Jarrow "hunter" frieze and those on the Ruthwell cross.<sup>238</sup>

Uninhabited vinescroll ornament related to the Hexham school is included in the panels on two sides of Bewcastle, along with linear interlace and a chequer pattern which Lawrence Stone derives from seventh-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork, although Collingwood, Clapham and Cramp relate it instead to the chequers on architectural fragments at Hexham, which Cramp derives from local Roman models.<sup>239</sup>

The human figures on Bewcastle and Ruthwell are carved in high relief. Figural iconography is restricted to three panels on a single face of the remaining Bewcastle cross shaft, which depict John the Baptist, Christ Adored by Beasts and St. John the Evangelist. The figural iconography of the panels on two opposite sides of Ruthwell includes scenes usually identified as Mary Magdalene Washing the Feet of Christ, Christ Healing the Blind Man, the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, John the Baptist, Christ Adored by Beasts, Saints Paul and Anthony in the Desert, and the Flight into Egypt.<sup>240</sup>

Northumbrian interest in Christian iconography is particularly likely to have developed at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. Benedict Biscop brought back a number of paintings to Monkwearmouth from Rome c. 676, including portraits of the Virgin and the apostles and scenes from the Gospels and the Apocalypse. He also obtained paintings for Jarrow after its foundation on another trip to Rome, including scenes from the Life of Christ and pairs of pictures relating Old and New Testament images.<sup>241</sup>

Both Ruthwell and Bewcastle are inscribed. The runic inscription

on the Bewcastle cross is now mostly illegible but was thought until recently to have mentioned Alchfrith of Deira, Wilfrid's patron. It has been argued that the cross is therefore unlikely to have been carved after Wilfrid's death in 709, but R. I. Page has cast doubt on the reading of Alchfrith's name in the inscription, which may have been "corrected" in the nineteenth century.<sup>242</sup> Even if the inscription did refer to Alchfrith, the cross might have been a later replacement of a wooden original. The figural scenes on the Ruthwell cross are identified by Latin inscriptions and excerpts from the Old English poem "The Dream of the Rood" are incised in Anglo-Saxon runes on the borders of the inhabited vinescrolls on two sides of the cross. Baldwin Brown, Brøndsted and Cramp have noted that the runes, which include some unusual forms, point to an eighth century date and Page has dated the runic inscriptions on both crosses no earlier than the mid-eighth century, although more recently he seems prepared to accept an earlier date, between 650 and 750.<sup>243</sup>

Stylistic arguments have been used to date the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses between the late seventh and the late eighth century. Brøndsted saw both as the work of foreign, "Oriental" artists, except for the inscriptions, and dated them shortly after 700.<sup>244</sup> Clapham dated them to the late seventh century and thought them to be the work of Anglo-Saxon sculptors, in view of the "awkwardness of some of the figures".<sup>245</sup> No one would now identify Ruthwell and Bewcastle as the work of foreign craftsmen. Collingwood's late eighth-century date for both crosses has found little support.<sup>246</sup> Kitzinger drew comparisons between the Ruthwell vinescrolls and sixth-century carvings at Ravenna and between the Bewcastle vinescrolls and Coptic wooden and ivory panels, but decided that the Ravenna and Coptic examples were too early to be relevant to Northumbrian sculpture. Instead, Kitzinger

proposed a general relationship between Anglo-Saxon vinescroll ornament and the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem of 691 and the Great Mosque in Damascus of c. 705, as well as the Mshatta facade and thought it unlikely that the eastern models for Northumbrian vinescrolls were imported later than the early eighth century, although he admitted that "some patterns might have come from a western late antique source unknown to us".<sup>247</sup> Kendrick found the style of Bewcastle to be "weaker" and later than Ruthwell and assigned Bewcastle a c. 700 date.<sup>248</sup> Saxl related the figural style of Ruthwell to the Codex Amiatinus, suggested that both Ruthwell and Bewcastle might reflect the influence of Romano-British sculpture, dated Bewcastle earlier than Ruthwell on the basis of drapery comparisons, and dated both crosses to the last quarter of the seventh century.<sup>249</sup> Kitzinger subsequently dated both crosses to the late seventh century, but rejected Saxl's stylistic arguments for an earlier date for Bewcastle.<sup>250</sup> Cramp follows Saxl in placing Bewcastle before Ruthwell and at one time dated Ruthwell to the mid-eighth century, although she has more recently advocated an early eighth-century date for both crosses.<sup>251</sup>

Historical arguments have also been used to date the two crosses. Schapiro thought that there were Britons on the winning side at the battle of Dunnichen, despite the lack of evidence that there were, and therefore dated Ruthwell before the Northumbrian defeat at Dunnichen in 685.<sup>252</sup> Stone dates Ruthwell after the foundation of Monkwearmouth but accepts Schapiro's pre-685 date, in view of the "British" victory at Dunnichen.<sup>253</sup> Alfred Smyth has now shown that the British kingdom of Rheged, in whose territory Ruthwell stands, probably collapsed c. 682, when bands of British mercenaries begin to appear in eastern Ireland, resulting in 684 in a punitive raid in Ireland by Ecgfrith of Northumbria, who was later killed at Dunnichen.<sup>254</sup> Carlisle, at the

centre of the old kingdom of Rheged, had an Anglo-Saxon reeve, Waga, who took Cuthbert on a tour of Carlisle's Roman ruins, during which Cuthbert had a vision of Ecgfrith's defeat at Dunnichen. Cuthbert apparently had episcopal authority over Carlisle and was there to ordain priests. Carlisle remained under Anglo-Saxon control after Dunnichen. Cuthbert later returned to conduct Iurminburg, Ecgfrith's widow, into a nunnery.<sup>255</sup> Eric Mercer's mid-eighth century date for Ruthwell and Bewcastle depends, in part, on historical evidence. Northumbria had established a bishopric at Whithorn shortly before Bede wrote the Historia Ecclesiastica. The Northumbrian king occupied the plain of Kyle in Ayrshire in 750 and, in alliance with the Picts, defeated the Britons of Strathclyde at their capital of Dumbarton in 756.<sup>256</sup> Ayrshire and Dumbarton lie outside the territory of Rheged, however, and the district around Ruthwell was probably under Northumbrian rule by 682 and remained so thereafter. Historical arguments can be used to assign any date to the Ruthwell cross between c. 682 and the mid-eighth century.

If the evidence of Symeon of Durham can be accepted, there were free-standing stone crosses in Northumbria by 740, whether or not the cross at Hexham now known as "Acca's cross" is one of those described by Symeon of Durham. Uninhabited vinescroll ornament seems to have originated in Northumbrian sculpture at Hexham. Ruthwell and Bewcastle provide the earliest examples of Christian iconography on Northumbrian crosses and probably reflect the influence of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. The panelled decoration of Ruthwell and Bewcastle became the most common type of ornament on Northumbrian crosses.

#### The Crosses of the Iona School

The three Iona School crosses at Iona are known by saints' names, while the Keills cross in Knapdale and the Kildalton and Kilnave



crosses in Islay are named for their sites. St. Oran's cross at Iona takes its name from St. Oran's Chapel, where the fragments of the cross were formerly housed.<sup>257</sup> There was some confusion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries over the names of St. John's and St. Martin's crosses, although St. Martin's cross is clearly labelled as such in the surviving copy of Edward Lhuyd's 1699 sketch.<sup>258</sup> Iona seems to have had a particular interest in St. Martin of Tours and the name of the cross might well date from an early period. Adomnán, whose familiarity with the Life of Martin by Sulpicius Severus is discussed above, notes that Martin's name was mentioned in a "customary prayer" included in the Iona liturgy in Columba's time.<sup>259</sup> St. John's cross was known by the Gaelic name of Crois Eoin in local tradition.<sup>260</sup> St. John the Evangelist was held in high regard in early medieval Insular monasteries. Kathleen Hughes noted that the dying abbot Boisil of Melrose chose to spend his last days studying St. John's Gospel with Cuthbert.<sup>261</sup> The Céilí Dé spent the evenings of alternate weeks reading St. John's Gospel in the first week and the Acts of the Apostles in the second.<sup>262</sup> Crosses named after Evangelists would not be out of place in monasteries which placed a special emphasis on Gospel Books.

Tales of the Reformers' wholesale destruction of free-standing crosses at Iona will no doubt continue to be published in popular guide books but, as bishop Reeves asked: "If some were thrown into the sea, why any left standing?"<sup>263</sup> St. Martin's cross and the late medieval MacLean's cross were left intact, which renders any systematic destruction of crosses most unlikely.<sup>264</sup> The fragmentary state of St. Oran's and St. John's crosses is the result of structural weakness.

The sculptured stone crosses of the Iona School were erected before rectangular blocks of stone were cut for use in ecclesiastical

architecture in the West Highlands and Islands, in contrast to the development of relief sculpture in Northumbria and Pictland, which followed the introduction of ecclesiastical architecture under Continental influence. Beehive Gaelic monks' cells, such as that on Eileach an Naoimh, did not provide a proper setting for architectural sculpture.<sup>265</sup> "St. Columba's Shrine", the earliest stone building identified at Iona, is traditionally regarded as the site of Columba's tomb. Its foundations are those of a rectangular structure with projecting antae, an Irish type which belongs to the ninth or tenth century.<sup>266</sup> Rectangular slabs were, however, roughly dressed for sculptural purposes in the Celtic West by the beginning of the eighth century. Examples are provided by the PETRI APVSTOLI stone at Whithorn (fig. 12g), the Cladh a' Bhile No. 1 hexafoil stone (pl. 14), the Raasay Chi-Rho slab (fig. 1c), the Iona LAPIS ECHODI stone (fig. 11f), and the early eighth-century Kilnasaggart pillar in Armagh.<sup>267</sup> Some knowledge of the quarrying and shaping of stone slabs was therefore available west of Druimalban before the Iona crosses were erected.

The first free-standing crosses erected in Gaelic monasteries were made of wood. The crosses associated with Columba mentioned by Adomnán, one of which was set in a millstone, were probably wooden.<sup>268</sup> Columbanus may have referred to a free-standing wooden cross in his Regula Coenobialis, where he prescribed twelve blows for a monk who "has not approached the cross" (crucem non adierit).<sup>269</sup> The colophon drawing on fol. 94V in the eighth or ninth-century Book of Mulling shows a number of crosses, identified by inscriptions, both outside and within two concentric circles. Dr. Lawrence Nees has recently challenged the traditional identification of the colophon drawing as the "plan" of an Irish monastery, presumably Tech-Moling in County Carlow, indicating the location of its free-standing crosses.<sup>270</sup> The

crosses shown outside the concentric circles are arranged in pairs. One member of each pair is named after an Evangelist, the other after an Old Testament prophet. Nees has shown that there is no evidence for the pairing of Evangelists and prophets in a Gaelic context and proposes that the drawing is a miniature intended for private liturgical use, based on a rough sketch of an Irish monastery, and argues that the pairing of Evangelists and prophets may have depended upon Carolingian influence. Nees would, however, accept some connexion between the crosses shown in the drawing and the erection of crosses in a Gaelic monastery. The acts of the seventh-century Synodus Hibernensis required the termon or precinct of a monastery to be delimited by crosses.<sup>271</sup> The cross "at the door of the enclosure" mentioned in the early ninth-century "Monastery of Tallaght" may have marked the termon of the monastery.<sup>272</sup> The socket stone of a cross base near St. Oran's Chapel on Iona was set near a probable entrance through the vallum.<sup>273</sup> In the seventh century, such crosses would have been made of wood.

### The Construction of the Iona School Crosses

Robert Stevenson called attention to the experimental nature of the Iona crosses in 1956.<sup>274</sup> Romilly Allen reconstructed the head of St. John's cross but Macalister was the first to associate the head with the shaft, when he restored the cross in 1927.<sup>275</sup> Macalister's reconstruction fell during a gale in 1951. Reconstructed in 1954, the cross was blown down again in 1957. Its fragments are currently in Newbattle Abbey, awaiting yet another reconstruction.<sup>276</sup> Romilly Allen recorded the side arms of St. Oran's cross, related its two shaft fragments to each other and identified the top arm as a cross shaft.<sup>277</sup> Stevenson was the first to recognize the relevance of its surviving

parts to each other and gave it the name "St. Oran's cross". The fragments of St. Oran's cross are currently in the so-called Nunnery Museum at Iona.<sup>278</sup> Stevenson suggested that the slots in the ends of the arms of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43), first noticed in 1853, were originally "completed by end-pieces of stone or even of wood", which may have formed separate decorative panels.<sup>279</sup> In his Rhind Lectures for 1949, Dr. James S. Richardson had suggested that the slots were intended to hold wooden extensions and that both cross and extensions might have been painted.<sup>280</sup> In view of the different methods of construction used for St. John's, St. Oran's and St. Martin's crosses, Stevenson proposed that the Iona sculptors "may have been experimenting more or less simultaneously with the theme of a monumental cross", at a time when the ringed cross form "was not fully settled or dominant, that is towards the beginning rather than the end of the series of the high crosses".<sup>281</sup>

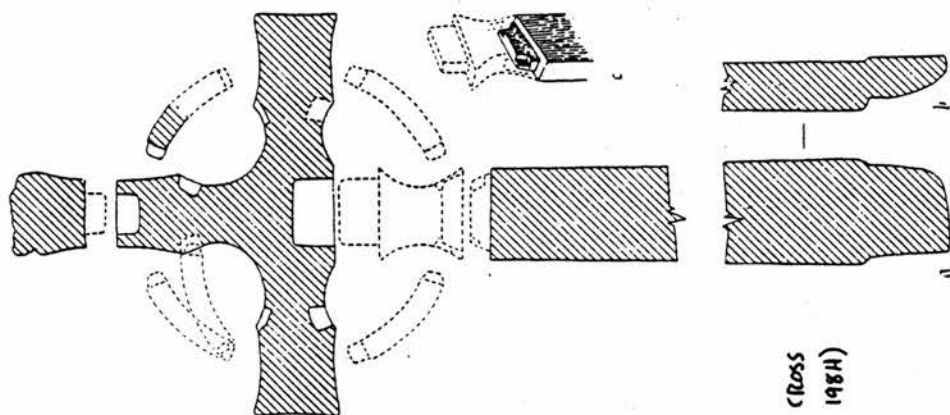
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland have now established that the Iona crosses did indeed form an early experimental group, as Dr. Stevenson suggested. Following Stevenson, the Royal Commission have shown that St. Oran's cross originally consisted of three parts (fig. 24a). The top arm and the shaft were tenoned into mortices in the transom, which is broken into two pieces. The decoration of the shaft, which is also broken into two fragments, is lost on one side and the bottom of the shaft is missing. Petrological examination has shown that the different stones used for the shaft and for the top arm and transom were probably quarried in the nearby Ross of Mull. The shaft material was "fatally susceptible to lamination" and the "obvious structural unsuitability of the local schists" led to the importation of stone quarried on the Argyll mainland for St. John's and St. Martin's crosses.<sup>282</sup> The top

and side arms of St. John's cross were carved from a single block of the same chlorite schist used for the shaft, which was probably quarried on the east shore of Loch Sween, possibly in the same quarries near Doide that provided stone for the late medieval Iona sculptors.<sup>283</sup> The bottom arm of the cross head, now lost, was a separate piece that tenoned into a mortice on the underside of the cross head and was itself morticed to receive a tenon at the top of the shaft (fig. 24b), which was removed during the reconstruction of 1954. The top and side arms are double-curved in the Northumbrian fashion and the lost bottom arm may have been double-curved as well.<sup>284</sup>

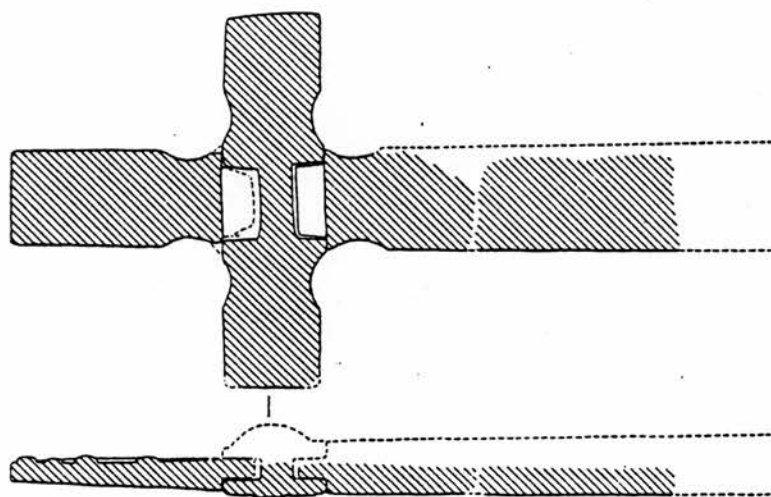
A more elaborate carpentry technique was devised for the second phase of St. John's cross. The Royal Commission have determined that the cross suffered damage in an early fall. The east face of the tenon at the base of the shaft has apparently sheared off, in contrast to the smoothly dressed west face. The lower socket stones of the surviving cross base belonged to the second phase, after the cross had fallen, and are shaped to receive the tenon in its damaged form. The break in the decoration at the top of the shaft (pl. 37) and the subsequent adaptation of the cross head form are best explained by an early fall.<sup>285</sup> The upper part of the top arm seems to have been lost in the fall and was replaced by a piece of mica-schist quarried in the Ross of Mull.<sup>286</sup> The fall must have occurred shortly after the original construction, since the replacement piece of the top arm is carved in the same style as the original cross head (pls. 37-8).

#### St. John's Cross and the Origin of the Ringed Cross Form

The four quadrants of the ring of St. John's cross were added to provide greater structural stability when the cross was repaired after the initial fall.<sup>287</sup> A fragment of one of the upper quadrants,



b. ST. JOHN'S CROSS  
(REAHMS 1982, 1984)



a. ST. ORAN'S CROSS (REAHMS 1982, 194C)

FIG. 24 CONSTRUCTION OF ST. ORAN'S AND ST. JOHN'S CROSSES



discovered during the preparation of the Iona Inventory, is carved from the same local stone used to repair the top arm of the cross, but the other quadrants are lost.<sup>288</sup> The lower quadrants apparently passed through slots cut in the missing lower arm of the cross head and were anchored in mortices cut in the corners on one face of the tenon atop the shaft.<sup>289</sup> The assembly of the lower quadrants, cross head and shaft could only have been achieved while the cross was "being fitted together" (fig. 24b).<sup>290</sup> The upper quadrants serve no structural purpose and were only added to complete the design of the ring, whatever symbolic purpose the ring may have served.<sup>291</sup> The Iona Inventory argues that the ring of St. John's cross is a sculptural innovation rather than an imitation of a wooden cross, although its construction reflects a knowledge of carpentry. Archaeological evidence for carpentry at Iona includes a wooden beam with grooves on opposite sides and a possible wooden bucket stave, which have been radiocarbon dated to the seventh century.<sup>292</sup> If carpenters had previously constructed wooden ringed crosses, as Ó Ríordáin proposed, the structural advantages of a ring would already have been known.<sup>293</sup> The transition from the carpentry construction of the ringed St. John's cross to monolithic ringed crosses within the Iona School makes an Iona origin for the ring virtually certain, at least in stone.

The addition of a ring to St. John's cross when it was repaired poses the possibility that the ringed form was known in some other medium, if not in wood. Stevenson has proposed that the ringed cross derived from metalwork and that the circular ring seen on St. John's cross was a simplified version of the quadrilobate ring found on early Pictish Class II cross slabs.<sup>294</sup> In support of Stevenson, Dr. Calvert would identify the ring of St. Martin's cross as quadrilobate,<sup>295</sup> but the Iona Inventory makes it clear that the sides of the ring are merely

flattened.<sup>296</sup> The quadrant of the ring in the lower left armpit of Glamis No. 2, however, has a circular curve, while the quadrant in the upper left is of the quadrilobate type (pl. 30), which suggests that both ring forms, circular and quadrilobate, were known in Pictland when Glamis No. 2 was carved. The quadrilobate type seems to derive from Anglo-Saxon metalwork, but Pictish knowledge of metalwork crosses with circular rings is more likely to have depended upon a Gaelic source. A figure on the south side of the Ahenny North cross carries a ringed cross of a probably early form, one with rectangular armpits.<sup>297</sup> The evolution of ringed crosses with curved armpits may have taken place in metalwork before Glamis No. 2 was carved. In any event, the different shapes of the quadrants of the ringed cross on Glamis No. 2 belong to an experimental phase, before the quadrilobate ring had become the dominant form in Pictland.

Memorial slabs bearing ringed crosses are particularly common in Ireland.<sup>298</sup> It has been suggested that a slab at Clonmacnoise inscribed OR AR CHUINDLESS might commemorate an abbot of Clonmacnoise who died c. 720,<sup>299</sup> but such an early date does not accord with the thistle-shaped quadrants of the slab's ringed cross. Other Irish slabs featuring ringed crosses with similar quadrants have been variously dated between 814 and 1032.<sup>300</sup> Sir Thomas Kendrick used the term "thistle cross" to describe the shape of the quadrants of circumscribed crosses incised on slabs at Gallen Priory, which he dated to the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>301</sup> Perhaps the earliest precisely datable Irish ringed cross is found on a slab at Athlone inscribed AILILL AUE DUNCHATHO, a king of Connacht whose death is recorded in 764.<sup>302</sup>

A number of memorial slabs at Iona feature ringed crosses. Examples are shown in Figures 25-6. Professor Jackson dates the inscriptions on two slabs, (fig. 25, nos. 45-6), to the eighth

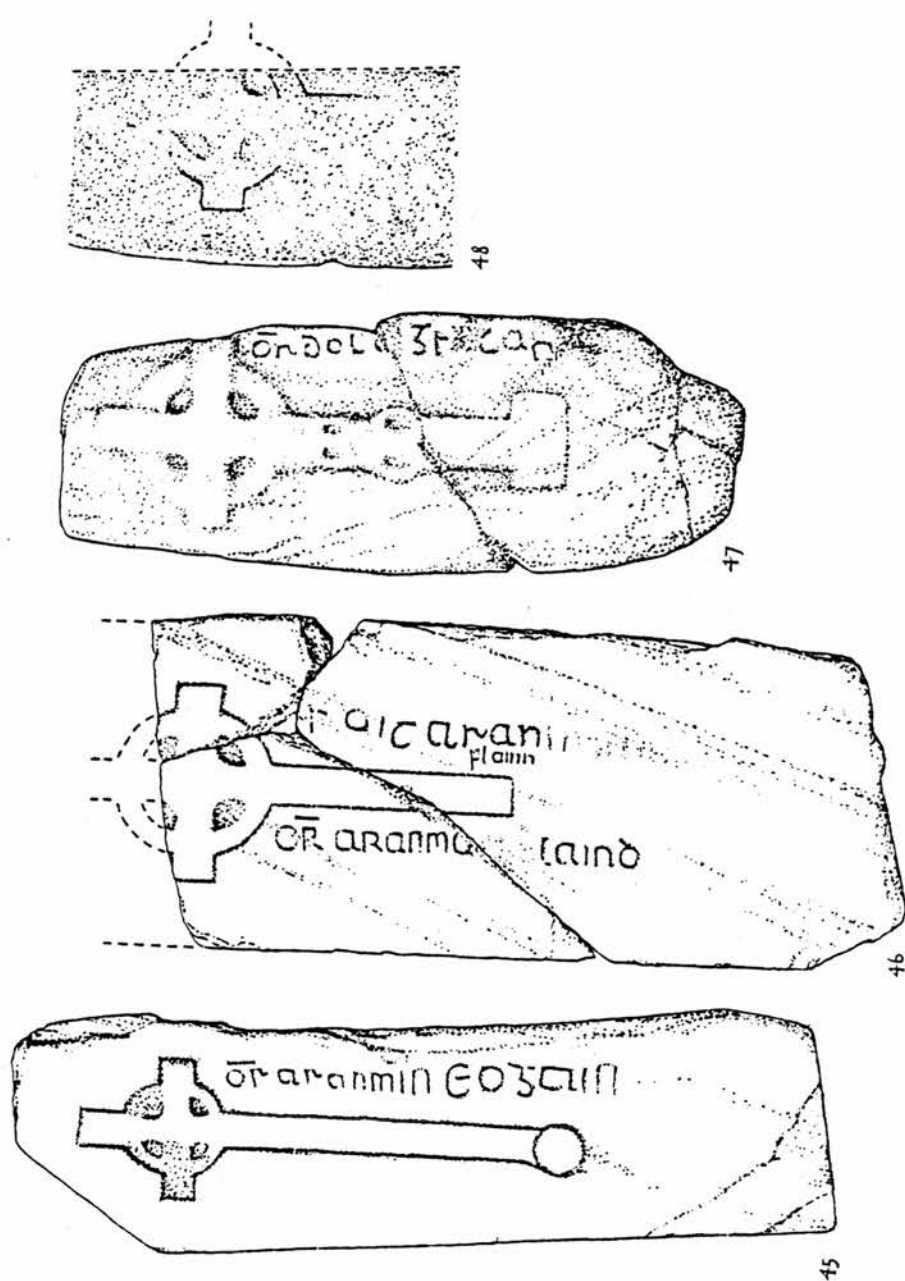


FIG. 25 RINGED CROSS SLABS AT IONA (RAHMS 1982, 186)

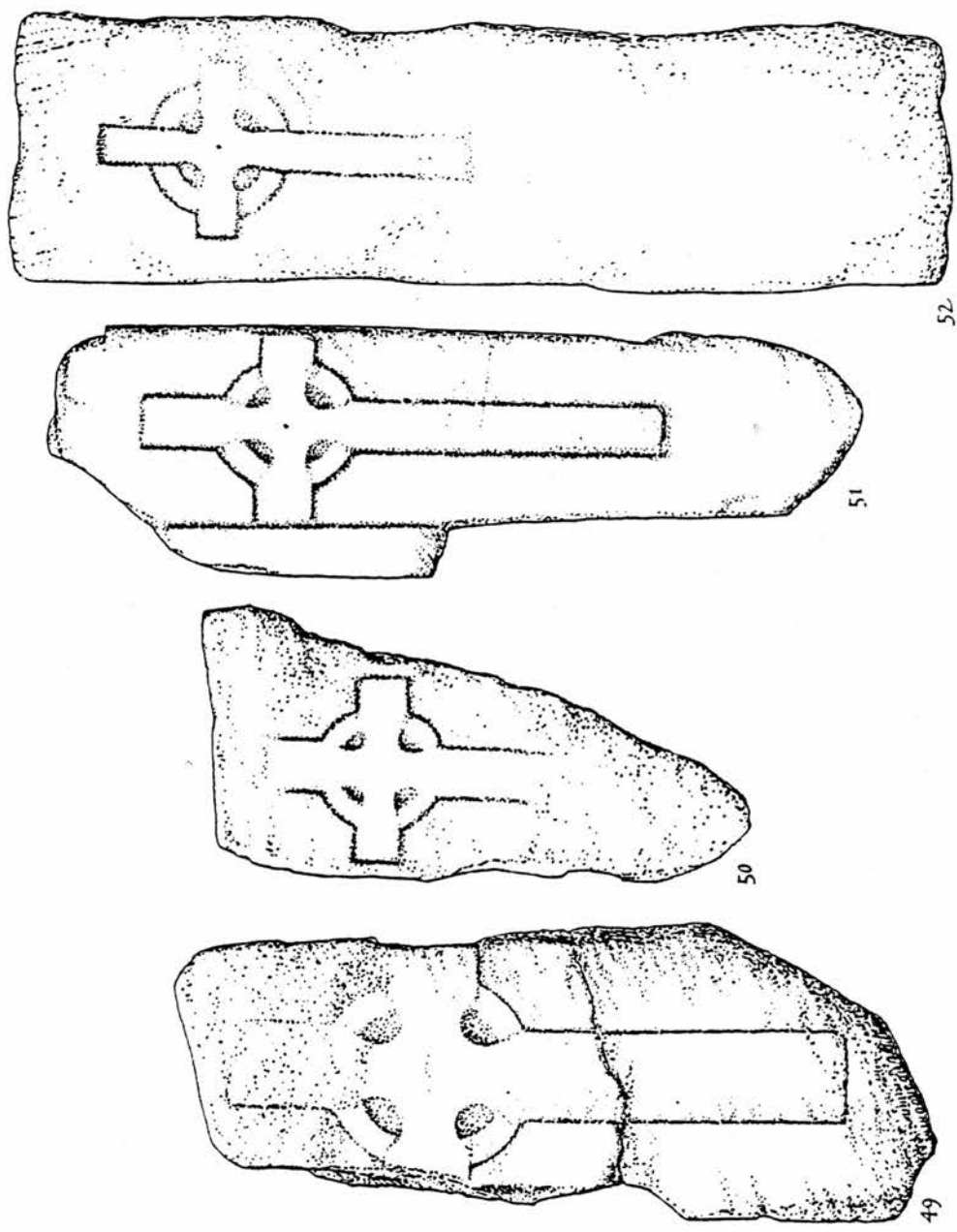


FIG. 16 RINGED CROSS SLABS AT IONA (REAHMS 1982, 1986)

century.<sup>303</sup> The pierced shaft of the ringed cross on another Iona slab (fig. 25, no. 47) is perhaps suggestive of metalwork. Jackson dates its inscription to the late eighth or early ninth century.<sup>304</sup>

### Carpentry Construction Outside Iona

A carpentry technique was employed in the construction of at least three crosses outside Iona. The lost head of the Bewcastle cross was "dowelled" into the shaft,<sup>305</sup> a feature which might derive via Oswald's wooden cross at Heavenfield, from free-standing wooden crosses introduced into Northumbria from Iona. The fragments of the East cross at Toureen Peakaun in County Tipperary, some of which are now missing, suggest that it was based on a wooden prototype and must have been quite unstable. Its separate arms were probably supported by wooden struts. Its decoration is restricted to the surviving shaft and consists of an incised cross on one side and an undeciphered inscription on the other. Dr. Harbison has assigned the cross an early eighth-century date, in view of similarities between some of the letter forms in its inscription and the lettering on the Ardagh Chalice, although he is now inclined to a ninth-century date for both cross and chalice.<sup>306</sup> According to the late medieval Lives of Abbán moccu Corbmaic, the seventh-century Beccán of Cluain Aird Mobecoc (Toureen Peakaun) performed cross-vigils before a stone cross he made for himself,<sup>307</sup> but the account in Abbán's Lives may be only an attempt to connect an early stone cross at Toureen Peakaun with Beccán. A cross fragment found in a Pictish area at Edzell in Angus (pl. 31), comprising a side arm and a central interlace-covered boss, has a mortice apparently meant to receive a tenon atop the lost shaft.<sup>308</sup> One face of the side arm is decorated with a key pattern also seen in the side arms of the crosses on the early Aberlemno No. 2 and the ninth-century Meigle

No. 5.<sup>309</sup> Projecting bosses are not found on the early Class II slabs and the relationship between interlace-covered bosses at Iona and in Pictland is discussed below. There is no evidence that a carpentry technique was used to construct a ringed cross in stone other than at Iona.

#### Construction of the Later Iona School Crosses

The repaired version of St. John's cross led to an alarmingly complex construction and the carpentry technique was subsequently abandoned by the Iona School sculptors, in favour of monolithic crosses. Only two of the remaining Iona School crosses are ringed, St. Martin's cross at Iona (pls. 42-43) and the Kildalton cross in Islay (pls. 39, 41). The Royal Commission suggests that the Kildalton cross, the only Iona School cross to achieve the "ideal proportions" of the head of St. John's cross in monolithic form, may have been the first sculptured stone cross whose original design included a ring.<sup>310</sup> The slots in the ends of the arms of St. Martin's cross, however, hark back to the carpentry construction of St. Oran's and St. John's crosses. The Iona Inventory suggests that the slots may have held wooden or metal terminals to decorate the ends of the arms, rather than to extend their width.<sup>311</sup> The narrow width of the arms of St. Martin's cross may lie behind the even narrower arms of the Keills cross in Knapdale, which has the smallest circular arm-pits of any Iona School cross (pl. 44). The arm-pits of the Kilnave cross in Islay are almost semicircular,<sup>312</sup> although they are somewhat flattened at the centre of the curve (pl. 48). Crosses similar in shape to the original outline of the Kilnave cross are carved on each of the four sides of the base of the Ahenny South cross.<sup>313</sup>

The Kildalton and Kilnave crosses were carved from local stone,



but the stone used for St. Martin's cross was imported from the Argyll mainland. The epidiorite of the Kildalton cross and the Torridonian flagstone used for the Kilnave cross seem to have been quarried nearby in each case.<sup>314</sup> The epidiorite of St. Martin's cross probably came from the east shore of Loch Sween, although its stepped base is carved from a single block of granite from the Ross of Mull.<sup>315</sup> No petrological study of the Keills cross has yet been published, although its stone has been described as "blue slate".<sup>316</sup>

### Ornamentation on the Iona School Crosses

The non-figural decoration of the Iona School crosses reflects the influence of manuscript illumination and metalwork and, in some cases, invites comparison with other Insular sculpture. In addition to key patterns, interlace and spiral decoration, the ornamental vocabulary of the Iona School included hollow bosses with internal pellets, known as "birds' nest" bosses, and other bosses framed by sculpted serpents, a motif which was developed in sculpture in Scotland before its transference to Ireland.

### Key patterns

Key patterns were developed in Insular manuscript illumination before they appeared in Insular sculpture. They were used extensively in Pictish relief sculpture but only sparingly by the sculptors of the Iona School. The key patterns in the constricted parts of the upper and lower arms of the Kilnave cross head (pl. 48) are too worn to permit positive identification. The key pattern in the upper right quadrant of the ring on the west face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41) may be the earliest sculptural example of Romilly Allen's key pattern no. 941.<sup>317</sup> Other versions of the same key pattern are carved on the

underside of the ring on the south side of the Kells Market cross.<sup>318</sup> and on two ninth-century Northumbrian pieces, a cross base fragment from Hurworth in County Durham and a cross shaft fragment at Norham in Northumberland.<sup>319</sup> It is also found in the initial N of Nativitas on fol. 8R in the Book of Kells.<sup>320</sup> Romilly Allen lists no Pictish sculptural versions of key pattern No. 941. The simpler key pattern No. 987 on the lower left quadrant of the ring on the west face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41) is found in manuscripts in the upper and lower borders of the Mark and Luke portraits in the Lichfield Gospels (pp. 142 and 218) and in the Book of Kells in two vertical rows to the left of the tail of the Q on the Quoniam page (fol. 188R) and in four vertical rows of three in an inset in the upper right arm of the Chi on the monogram page (fol. 34R).<sup>321</sup> Key pattern No. 987 is seen in Pictland on the cross on a slab fragment from Drainie and on the head of a cross of similar shape, although ringed, at St. Vigean, which is unlikely to be earlier than the mid-ninth century.<sup>322</sup> It is also found mixed with an eight-cord plait on the raised rim of a circular fragment from Easter Ross, Tarbat No. 5, which encircles seven small bosses emerging from a spiral pattern in the manner of the seven bosses within each disc of the Double Disc symbol on the ninth-century Rosemarkie No. 1 slab.<sup>323</sup> No. 987 is also carved on a Lindisfarne cross shaft dated by Cramp between the last quarter of the ninth and the mid-tenth century.<sup>324</sup> Kildalton may thus provide the oldest sculptural examples of key patterns 941 and 987.

Key pattern No. 994 decorates the top of the shaft of the Keills cross (pl. 44) and is a more complex version of Romilly Allen's key pattern 988 and 993.<sup>325</sup> Single panels of No. 988 serve as insets in the L on the Liber generationis page in the Hereford Cathedral Library Insular Gospel Book (fol. 1), in the corners of the cross page in the

fragmentary St. Gall 1395 (p. 422)<sup>326</sup> and in initials on fols. 102V and 226R in the Book of Kells.<sup>327</sup> Double panels of the related key pattern No. 993 are found in initials on fols. 145R, 185V and 275R in the Book of Kells.<sup>328</sup> Single panels of key pattern No. 988 appear on fol. 18V in the earliest Carolingian Court School manuscript, the Godescalc Evangelistary, and in the later Harley 2788, on fol. 14V and the Canon Table on fol. 8V.<sup>329</sup> The presence in Carolingian manuscripts of key patterns of a type found in the Book of Kells and on the Keills cross could be seen to support Friend's contention that Iona and the Book of Kells were influenced by Carolingian manuscripts.<sup>330</sup> It should be noted, however, that the same key pattern decorates the Byzantine court dress of the female figure on the first folio of the Gellone Sacramentary, a manuscript whose exact date is unknown, but one which may be earlier than, or contemporary with the earliest Carolingian manuscripts.<sup>331</sup> In any event, key patterns were used in Insular art long before they appeared in Carolingian manuscripts. The Keills cross key pattern, No. 994, is based upon key patterns 988 and 993. It is found in the early ninth-century Mac Durnan Gospels<sup>332</sup> and engraved on ninth-century Irish hand-bells.<sup>333</sup> Its sculptural descendants are found in Ireland on the underside of the rings on the north faces of the Kells Market cross and the Muiredach cross at Monasterboice.<sup>334</sup> It also appears on the Irton cross in Cumberland.<sup>335</sup> Key patterns 988, 993 and 994 are not found in Pictish sculpture.

### Interlace Patterns

Flat areas of linear interlace were used infrequently by the Iona School. The Royal Commission has identified the interlace patterns in the upper left and lower right quadrants of the ring on the west face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41) as examples of Romilly Allen's inter-

lace pattern No. 593, although Allen himself thought it closer to No. 592. 592 and 593 are related to No. 591 and all three feature "regular cruciform breaks". Nos. 591 and 593 derive from a six-cord plait, No. 592 from an eight-cord plait.<sup>336</sup> No. 591 is found in the decoration of the rim on the underside of the base of the Ardagh Chalice<sup>337</sup> and in the left side of the border above the Canon Table on fol. 2V in the Book of Kells.<sup>338</sup> It was also carved on a lost cross shaft fragment from Billingham in County Durham.<sup>339</sup> No. 592 is found with animal-headed terminals in the bottom panel on the left side of the ninth-century Rosemarkie No. 1 slab in Easter Ross.<sup>340</sup> Kildalton may provide the earliest sculptural example of No. 593.<sup>341</sup> The Iona Inventory identifies the interlace border on the sides of the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32) as a four-cord plait, Romilly Allen's No. 503, one of the most common interlace patterns found in Insular art.<sup>342</sup> The hind legs of the four animals on the sides of the central boss on the east face of the Kildalton cross head (pl. 39) merge with the interlace carved around the boss.<sup>343</sup> The serpent held in the talons of the winged figure on the top arm of the Keills cross (pls. 44, 46) emerges from the interlace carved around the winged figure. The tightly-woven, fine-line interlace used in the border on the three lower panels on the west face and in the constricted inner parts of the arms of the cross head on both sides of St. John's cross (pls. 37-8) is of the same type used for the background decoration of the south arm of the Kilnave cross (pl. 48) and the Nave Island cross arm fragment (pl. 50).<sup>344</sup> Its use for background decoration for additional ornament on Iona School cross arms suggests the influence of chip-carved metalwork.

#### Metalwork Influence on Structure and Ornament

Certain structural features of St. John's cross and other

decorative features of all Iona School crosses reflect the influence of metalwork. In addition to the dense, fine-line interlace seen on St. John's, the Kilnave cross and the Nave Island fragment, a relationship with metalwork is also suggested by the central panel on the east face of St. John's cross, the serpents and boss motif, the "birds' nest" bosses on St. Oran's, St. John's, the Kildalton, and Keills crosses, and some of the spiral decoration on St. John's cross.

Two circular depressions on the west face of St. John's cross, one at the centre of the top shaft panel, the other at the centre of the cross head (pl. 38), were apparently designed to hold projecting metal bosses.<sup>345</sup> The rim of the cross head recess is undercut and was probably intended for a metal inset, most likely of bronze, which was hammered into place.<sup>346</sup> Collingwood suggested that bosses were originally inserted in the small sockets on either side of a cross head from Lastingham, Yorkshire, decorated with "closed-circuit" interlace, which Cramp identifies as a ninth-century feature.<sup>347</sup> Romilly Allen suggested that the circular depression at the centre of the cross head on the Class II Cossins slab near Glamis held a raised boss but Henderson, noting the absence of bossed decoration elsewhere on the slab, suggests a "flat metal plaque" instead. Interlace pattern No. 568, seen in the side borders on the back of the Cossins slab, only occurs on late Pictish monuments, no earlier than the ninth century.<sup>348</sup> St. John's cross may thus be the earliest Insular example of stone sculpture with applied metalwork decoration, although the Iona Inventory suggests that the deeply-cut rounded armpits of Aberlemno No. 2 may have been designed for bosses.<sup>349</sup> There is no other bossed decoration on Aberlemno No. 2, however, and the depth of its armpits may only be due to the height of the relief of the cross and its

quadrilobate ring.

The dense interlace background on the south arm of the Kilnave cross and the Nave Island cross arm fragment also suggest metalwork influence. A spiral-decorated roundel is set in a field of tightly-woven interlace on the south arm of the Kilnave cross (pl. 48). The decoration of the north arm is lost but was probably similar. Spiral-decorated roundels are set against a chip-carved interlace background on two fragments of a gilt bronze mount from a Viking grave at Halsan in Norway.<sup>350</sup> A chip-carved interlace background supports spiral-decorated circular bosses on one side of each of two D-shaped bronze objects in the Musée des Antiquités Nationales at St. Germain-en-Laye, which have been variously identified as hanging-lamps, mounts for the gable ends of a house-shaped tomb shrine or the arms of a metalwork cross, but their Gaelic origin is generally recognized (pls. 51-2).<sup>351</sup> The fragments of a gilt bronze object from a Viking grave at Gausel in Norway came from the same mould used to produce one of the St. Germain objects.<sup>352</sup> The relevance of the monster-headed serpents that issue from the spiral-decorated roundels and bosses on the Halsan, Gausel and St. Germain mounts to the Iona serpents and bosses motif is discussed below. The south arm of the Kilnave cross appears to imitate similar metalwork decoration, either before open-jawed creatures were added to the design, or later, when they had been subtracted.

The Nave Island cross arm fragment (pl. 50) features a badly worn rectangular ornamental panel, enclosing a central lozenge, against a tightly-woven interlace background. The Royal Commission suggests that the motifs in the triangular corners of the rectangular panel may be "of foliaceous character",<sup>353</sup> although they are perhaps more likely to be trumpet spirals. A lozenge is set amidst several rows of small bosses in the rectangular panel at the top of the shaft on the west



face of the Moone cross in County Kildare.<sup>354</sup> Both the Nave Island fragment and the Moone cross panel reflect the influence of metalwork. The chip-carved interlace imitated by the background decoration of the Nave Island fragment belongs to an earlier phase than the rows of bosses on the Moone cross panel. Clusters of small bosses did not become common in Irish metalwork until the ninth century.<sup>355</sup>

The central panel on the east face of St. John's cross combines key patterns, interlace and spiral ornament in a composition unique in Insular sculpture (pl. 37). The triangles in the upper and lower borders of the panel enclose an abbreviated key pattern. The triangles at the sides of the panel and the four diagonal squares arranged vertically down the centre are filled with all-over interlace (pl. 37E). The three pairs of remaining diagonal squares feature "rosettes" of spiral ornament with raised trumpet spirals.<sup>356</sup> The Iona Inventory relates the decoration of the panel to the interlace-filled diaper pattern in the right-hand border of fol. 8R in the Book of Kells and the rosette-filled diapering above and below the second line of text on fol. 114V.<sup>357</sup> A metalwork connexion is also suggested by two die-stamped rectangular silver panels featuring raised spiral-and-boss ornament and tightly-knit interlace, which may have been attached to the underside of the Derrynaflan paten. Tightly-woven interlace is also found on the die-stamped gilt silver panels on the Derrynaflan paten stand. In the Preliminary Account of the Derrynaflan hoard, Michael Ryan dates the paten and stand between the mid-eighth and the early ninth century and relates the die-stamped panels on both to manuscript illumination.<sup>358</sup> The die-stamped Derrynaflan panels and the central panel on the east face of St. John's cross may be directly dependent upon a manuscript source, although metalwork could have provided an intervening phase between manuscripts and the sculptural

panel on St. John's cross, perhaps in the form of a sheet of embossed metalwork attached to a wooden cross.

### The Serpents and Bosses Motif

The figures of serpents frame projecting bosses on four Iona School crosses and on two major Pictish monuments, the St. Andrews Sarcophagus and the Class II Nigg slab in Easter Ross. The detailed descriptions of the serpents and bosses decoration of St. Oran's, St. John's, St. Martin's, and the Kildalton cross, published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, better enable us to determine whether the motif originated at Iona or in Pictland. First, however, it is necessary to sub-divide serpents and bosses ornament in the Iona School into different types.

The most common form of serpents and bosses decoration on the Iona School crosses is a medallion comprising a cruciform arrangement of four bosses, set in a saltire of smaller spiral bosses and encircled by serpents issuing from the four principal bosses. Single medallions are carved on the squared ends of the arms on the front of St. Oran's cross, although the medallion on the right arm has suffered damage in the upper left (pl. 32).<sup>359</sup> Two serpents issue from each of the principal bosses in the medallions and an open-jawed serpent's head, seen from the side, attacks the head of another serpent, seen from above, in the corner spandrels around the medallions. The small bosses at the centre of the saltire on the left arm are connected by trumpet spirals, but the saltire on the right arm apparently had a small central boss surrounded by a ring of bosses. Vertical pairs of similar medallions are carved on the bottom of the shaft on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37) and on the lower two-thirds of the west face of the shaft of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41).<sup>360</sup> Three vertical

medallions are carved on the east face of the shaft of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43).<sup>361</sup> The four principal bosses of the upper medallion on St. John's cross, the two large bosses at the sides of the upper Kildalton medallion and the upper and lower bosses of the lower Kildalton medallion are of the "birds' nest" type, with single internal projections. The four outer "birds' nest" bosses of the lower medallion on St. John's cross have three internal projections. The four large bosses in each of the three St. Martin's medallions appear to have been covered with interlaced. Four short serpents issue from the rounded boss at the centre of the saltire in the lower medallion on St. John's cross. Clusters of small spiral bosses are carved at the centres of the saltires in the upper St. John's medallion and the bottom medallion on St. Martin's cross. The small central boss in the saltire of the upper Kildalton medallion and the central spiral-decorated bosses in the upper two St. Martin's medallions each produce four trumpet spirals with bossed terminals. Two serpents issue from opposite sides of the four principal bosses in all of these medallions. Half of the serpents have open-jawed monster heads, seen from the side, which attack the heads of the other serpents, seen from above, in the corner spandrels of the medallions. The serpents seen from above in the medallions on St. John's and the Kildalton cross have lizard-like heads and short forelegs. The pairs of medallions on St. John's and the Kildalton cross and the three medallions on St. Martin's cross are separated by intertwined serpents, and the plaiting of the serpents between the medallions on Kildalton is identical to that on St. Martin's cross.<sup>362</sup> The serpents and bosses decoration of the damaged lowest decorative zone or "panel" on the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32) is rendered more complex than the other Iona School medallions by the addition of corner "birds' nest" bosses with single internal

projections, and by the three serpents which issue from each of the principal bosses<sup>363</sup> to create a writhing, unruly snakes' nest.

The spiral decoration of the bosses in the saltires of the medallions on St. Oran's, St. John's, St. Martin's, and the Kildalton cross is subordinate to the serpents and bosses which dominate the medallions. The relationship is reversed in the long central decorative field on the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32) and in the top shaft panel on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37), both of which are damaged but were originally dominated by double saltires of spiral-decorated bosses grouped around other, larger bosses. Serpent ornament is restricted to the central boss in each panel. Two small serpents with "eared heads" seen from above emerge from the broken central boss on the St. Oran's "panel". Four short serpents issue from the central boss in the panel on St. John's cross.<sup>364</sup> A similar double saltire composition is carved in the third panel from the bottom on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38), but four "entwined pairs of animals", rather than serpents, are grouped around its central boss.<sup>365</sup>

Serpents also play a minor role in the spiral decoration on the front of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pls. 33-4), where a serpent with eyes and ears, its head seen from the side, springs from each of the four major spiral-decorated roundels to attack a smaller spiral boss.<sup>366</sup> Related decoration appears on a domical gilt bronze mount in Copenhagen, which features serpents whose eyes and ears form a single unit, issuing from bosses to attach "relief bosses of whirl pattern".<sup>367</sup> The mouths of two of the Copenhagen serpents are similar to the mouth of the badly-weathered upward-turning serpent's head, seen from above, whose outline is extended from the border on the right of the top arm of the Keills cross (pl. 46) and placed beneath the small animal to the lower right of the winged figure which dominates the top arm of the

cross. The top arm of the Keills cross is bordered by a two-headed serpent whose other head is seen from above, next to the small animal to the lower left of the large winged figure. David Wilson and Peter Harbison liken the serpent and boss ornament of the Copenhagen mount to that of the two D-shaped bronze objects in St. Germain,<sup>368</sup> whose relevance to the Iona School is discussed in greater detail below.

Other arrangements of serpents and bosses are found on Iona School crosses. The heads of all of the serpents on the east face of the north arm of St. John's cross are seen from above (pl. 37).<sup>369</sup> Four serpents emerge from the large central boss, three serpents from each of the six smaller bosses. A simplified version of the same arrangement, six smaller bosses grouped around a large central boss, is carved on the upper part of the east face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43), which functions as the lower arm of the cross head. Three serpents spring from the large central boss, two serpents from five of the smaller bosses, but only a single serpent from the boss in the lower left.<sup>370</sup> The west face of the repaired upper arm of St. John's cross (pl. 38) probably displayed a similar group of six smaller bosses around a large central boss, with serpents emerging from each boss, although much of the decoration is now lost.<sup>371</sup> Serpents spring from the large central bosses and four smaller bosses on the ends of the arms on the west face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41). The central boss on the right arm is covered with interlace. The principal boss on the left arm is divided into four interlace-covered panels by the bodies of four serpents which spiral from its centre.<sup>372</sup> Serpents, some with biting monster heads, emerge from five bosses of similar size on the constricted parts of the left and lower arms of the cross head on the east face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 39) and others, some with birds' heads, issue from the four bosses on the constriction of the right arm on the same face.<sup>373</sup>

Serpents also spring from the six bosses in the bottom panel on the west face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 42). Each of the interlace-covered bosses on the side arms on the east face of St. Martin's cross produces three serpents (pl. 43). A nest of serpents emerges from the bosses grouped around the circular depression in the top <sup>shaft</sup> panel on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38).

Pairs of serpents with crossed necks and confronted heads are carved on St. Oran's, St. John's, St. Martin's, and the Kildalton cross. Examples may be found in the bottom "panel" on the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32) and in the serpents and bosses decoration of the upper part of the shaft on the east face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43). Seven pairs of confronted serpents' heads, whose bodies issue from seven small bosses, are grouped around the large central boss on the west face of the Kildalton cross, which itself produces four short serpents (pl. 41).<sup>374</sup> Two serpents spring from each of the six round bosses on the back of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pl. 36). The damaged heads of four serpents appear to have been confronted in two pairs on the sides of the top arm and their crossed bodies frame a rhomboidal boss between the four lower rounded bosses. The two confronted serpents at the bottom issue from the two lowest bosses. Four monster-headed serpents, one emerging from each of the top four bosses, hold a human head between their open jaws in the central space between the top four bosses. The crossed bodies of two serpents, one issuing from each of the top two bosses, run along the border in the upper corners of the cross arm, their heads turned towards the centre of the cross.<sup>375</sup> The serpents produced by the eight "birds' nest" bosses in the second panel from the bottom on the west face of the shaft of St. John's cross (pl. 38) form a diagonal grid. The heads of some of these serpents, at least one of which is open-jawed, are



isolated. The upper bodies of other serpents are crossed in pairs, their heads either confronted or turned away from each other. A rhomboidal boss occupies the panel's central lozenge and the remaining interspaces are filled with bossed spiral ornament.<sup>376</sup>

The Iona School created a number of different serpents and bosses compositions, despite the limited vocabulary of the motif, but Cecil Curle and Francoise Henry suggested in a joint article that the motif was first developed in Pictland and later adapted at Iona.<sup>377</sup> Robert Stevenson also attributes a Pictish origin to serpents and bosses ornament. Some of the Iona School bosses are covered with dense interlace, which appears in flattened form in roundels on the earliest Pictish relief slabs in Angus. Rounded interlace-covered bosses, which may be a later development, appeared in Pictland on the left end panel of the St. Andrews Sarcophagus (pl. 53) and in the two long vertical panels beneath the arms of the cross on the front of the Nigg slab (pls. 54, 56). In 1955, Stevenson therefore derived the serpents and bosses of the Iona School "from Fife and Angus via Ross and Cromarty".<sup>378</sup> Some of the Iona School bosses, however, are decorated with spirals. Spiral ornament plays a very minor role in the earliest Class II slabs, although bosses decorated with bossed spiral ornament are carved at the centre of the St. Andrews panel and above the left arm of the cross on the Nigg slab. The rounded boss to the right of the top arm of the Nigg cross is decorated with a key pattern (pls. 54-5), an unusual and possibly later innovation. In 1956, Stevenson altered the sequence he proposed in 1955 and suggested that the serpent and boss ornament first found at Iona on the back of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pl. 36) was carved under Pictish influence from Fife or Angus. The "more subtle and varied" spiral forms on the front of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pls. 33-4) reflect manuscript influence, in Stevenson's view,

and had a subsequent effect on the Nigg slab.<sup>379</sup>

More specific comparisons must be made to determine the probable progression of serpents and boss ornament from one side of Druimalban to the other. The Iona Inventory compares the two "eared serpents" seen from above, emerging from the central boss in the double saltire composition on the front of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32), to the two eared serpents produced by the interlace-covered boss in the lower left quadrant of the St. Andrews panel (pl. 53).<sup>380</sup> The heads of the four serpents that issue from the interlace decoration of the damaged boss in the upper right quadrant of the St. Andrews panel are seen from the side and their mouths are closed, although the tongues of at least two of them are generated by the interlace decoration of the boss (pl. 53a). The heads of the top two serpents in the bottom panel on the west face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 42) are seen from the sides and have closed mouths. Serpents surround bosses covered with interlace on the side arms on the west face of Kildalton (pl. 41) and on the east face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43). The St. Andrews bosses produce either two or four serpents but, as we have seen, Iona School bosses produce any number of serpents from one to four. The essential features of the motif at St. Andrews, serpents emerging from interlace bosses, their heads seen from the side or from above, are found on Iona School crosses, but Iona School serpents also spring from "birds' nest" and spiral bosses. The spiral boss at the centre of the St. Andrews panel produces no serpents, nor do the St. Andrews serpents have the open-jawed monster heads or lizard-like forequarters of some Iona School serpents. The extended tongues of the serpents in the upper left quadrant of the St. Andrews panel are also seen at Nigg and are a unique Pictish feature. The integration of serpents, interlace bosses and bossed spiral ornament in Iona School sculpture is suggestive of

the inventive phase of a new form of ornament which was later used at St. Andrews, where some of its features were adopted and others were ignored.

There are eight interlace-covered bosses in the panel to the right of the cross shaft on the Nigg slab (pls. 54, 56). Three serpents emerge from each of the four corner bosses and two serpents from each of the four remaining bosses. The heads of the two serpents above and between the top two bosses and the two below and between the bottom two bosses have closed mouths and protruding tongues, which feed into the interlace decoration of the adjacent bosses. Two of the four serpents' heads at the centre of the panel lie unthreateningly across the necks of the two serpents beneath them, as do the heads of two others, each placed between the bottom two bosses on either side. Lozenge-shaped areas of interlace are inserted in the central spaces between the top four and the bottom four bosses, their lines drawn from a single thread taken from each of the four adjacent bosses and, at least in the case of the lower lozenge, from the tongues of the two serpents above it.<sup>381</sup> Two small spiral bosses are carved on opposite sides at the centre of the panel. Single tendrils emerge from the interlace decoration of the four corner bosses to form flat isolated coils at the sides of the panel. The whole is vaguely reminiscent of the second panel from the bottom on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38), but the Nigg panel is carved with a more lyrical sense of delicacy than any comparable passage in the sculpture of the Iona School and lacks the violence of the monster-headed Iona School serpents and the restless quality of the serpents and bosses medallion at the bottom of the shaft on the front of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32), or the top shaft panel on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38).<sup>382</sup>

The panel to the left of the cross shaft on the Nigg slab (pls.

54, 56) features four interlace-covered rounded bosses in the corners and two interlace-covered rhomboidal bosses at the centre. The heads of two of the three serpents emerging from each of the corner bosses are placed at the narrow ends of the panel. The necks of the third serpents produced by each of the four corner bosses are plaited at the centre of the panel in a manner reminiscent of the plaited serpents that separate the successive medallions on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37), the west face of Kildalton (pl. 41) and the east face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 43). Four serpents emerge from the interlace decoration of each of the two rhomboidal bosses. The bodies of four of these eight serpents form an oval around the rhomboidal bosses. In contrast to the circular medallions on the Iona School crosses, the saltire within the Nigg oval is composed of serpents rather than spiral bosses, although eight pairs of small spiral bosses are carved around the ends of the rhomboidal bosses. The small spiral bosses are produced by lines emerging from all six interlace-covered bosses in the panel. A rhomboidal boss similar to the two within the Nigg oval, but whose surface decoration is lost, is carved between the bottom four rounded bosses on the back of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pl. 36), which is framed by serpents but generates none of its own. Most of the twenty serpents' heads in the Nigg panel are damaged but each of the four that meet in two pairs at the top and bottom of the oval are seen from the side and their tongues are connected to small spiral bosses nearby.

All of the Nigg serpents emerge from interlace-covered bosses, as do some Iona School serpents, but the latter also issue from spiral-decorated and "birds' nest" bosses. The delicate tongues of the Nigg serpents and the flat areas of interlace inserted in the panel to the right of the Nigg cross shaft appear to be later, more sophisticated

additions to the vocabulary of the motif found in the Iona School. The oval to the left of the Nigg cross shaft is a somewhat mannered refinement of the Iona School medallions. Two circles of spiral bosses, the lower half of the lower one now lost, were carved at the lower right on the front of the Nigg slab (pls. 54, 58), without the attendant serpents of the spiral boss-decorated Iona medallions. Spiral ornament played a major role in the Iona School medallions and the massive boss at the centre of the cross head on the west face of Kildalton (pl. 41) is covered with spirals and surrounded by serpents. The Nigg sculptor carved spiral bosses above the left arm of the cross (pls. 54-5) and a masterful spiral composition with no associated serpents at the lower left on the front of the slab (pls. 54, 57), but he was more hesitant than his counterparts at Iona about mixing spiral ornament with serpents and bosses, nor did he introduce serpents into spiral compositions, as the Iona sculptors did on the top arm and the central decorative zone on the shaft on the front of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32), or in the top shaft panel on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37). Fierce monsters attacking stolid lizards gave way to the dainty tongues of the graceful snakes of Nigg. On the whole, the line of development seems more likely to have gone from Iona to Nigg, where the constituent features of the Iona motif have been separated into their different components and treated individually. To one familiar with Insular sculpture, Nigg has the appearance of the finest early medieval sculpture in Scotland north of Ruthwell and east of St. Andrews, but that impression would be strongly challenged had St. John's cross survived the passage of time as well as Nigg.

Most of the surviving Insular metalwork decorated with serpents and bosses seems to belong to a Gaelic milieu. An Iona provenance is particularly likely for the D-shaped St. Germain objects, whose function

was apparently ecclesiastical.<sup>383</sup> Both of them have six spiral-decorated bosses on one side, producing twelve serpents on one and thirteen serpents on the other (pls. 51-2). One pair of confronted bird-headed serpents recalls the bird-headed serpents in the constriction of the right arm on the east face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 39) and the confronted pairs of serpents' heads on other Iona School crosses. Some St. Germain serpents have open-jawed monster heads seen from the side, others have eared serpent heads seen from above, features also found on Iona School crosses. Some St. Germain serpents have human heads seen en face and attacked by monsters, recalling the four monster-headed serpents attacking an isolated human head on the back of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pl. 36), or the two open-jawed quadrupeds on the centre panel of the Keills cross, which hold between them a human head terminating a line of interlace (pls. 44-5).

Henry related the decoration of the St. Germain objects to the spiral roundels and open-jawed serpents on the Halsan fragments, whose chip-carved interlace is discussed above; the open-jawed serpents with protruding tongues emerging from bosses against a zoomorphic interlace background on a fragment of a gilt bronze plaque from Romføjellen in Norway; and the bosses and serpents on a chip-carved interlace background around the rim of a gilt bronze mount from an early Viking grave at Lilleby, also in Norway.<sup>384</sup> Dr. Henderson was once inclined to a Pictish provenance for the St. Germain objects and the Romføjellen plaque, but would now "concede" them to Iona.<sup>385</sup> Egil Bakka suggests a Northumbrian provenance for the Lilleby mount, in view of the animal and vinescroll ornament on its central boss, but David Wilson compares the animals to others depicted on silver objects in the St. Ninian's Isle treasure and would place Lilleby in Pictland, where foliate



ornament and serpents and bosses are also found.<sup>386</sup> The Lilleby serpents form S-curves, their heads are seen from above and they lack the open-jawed monster heads of the St. Germain objects, the Halsan fragments and the Romføjellen plaque. Monster heads are a trait of Gaelic serpents.

#### "Birds' Nest" Bosses

"Birds' nest" bosses with one or three internal projections are unique to the Iona School and are found on the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32), on both sides of the shaft and on the side arms of St. John's cross (pls. 37-8), on the west face of the shaft of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41), and at the centre of the Keills cross head (pls. 44, 46). One of the single-pelleted "birds' nest" bosses in the upper medallion of the two at the bottom of the shaft on the east face of St. John's cross has traces of interlace decoration on the sides. Interlace is also carved on the sides of the central "birds' nest" bosses in the side arms on the west face of St. John's cross, which each have three internal projections.<sup>387</sup> "Birds' nest" bosses with spiral decoration on the sides and three internal pellets are carved on the centre of the Keills cross head and at the centre of the upper part of the shaft on the west face of the Kildalton cross.<sup>388</sup>

The Iona Inventory derives "birds' nest" bosses from the granulation on the heads of the studs in glass or enamel bosses seen, for example, on the Tara Brooch and the Ardagh Chalice.<sup>389</sup> Dr. Nancy Edwards relates the Iona School's "birds' nest" bosses to the "nailhead" bosses on the Ahenny crosses and derives both types from metalwork.<sup>390</sup> Dr. Henderson suggests, however, in her review of the Iona Inventory that "an evolution in sculptural terms can be traced in Pictish sculpture" but has not yet expanded upon her suggestion in

print.<sup>391</sup> There is little in Pictish sculpture directly comparable to the Iona School's "birds' nest" bosses. Dr. Calvert would identify the outer interlace boss above the right arm of the Nigg slab cross, which has a spiral disc set in a slight central depression (pls. 54-5), as the "progenitor" of the "birds' nest" bosses on the Iona crosses.<sup>392</sup> This single Pictish example may be compared to the boss at the centre of the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37), now happily recovered by the Royal Commission, which also has interlace decoration on the sides and a broad, shallow central depression with no surviving decoration.<sup>393</sup> A fragment, Tarbat No. 6, may have the only circular Pictish sculptural device with an internal projection, a broad boss set within a raised rim decorated with key pattern No. 1021, an annular adaptation of key pattern No. 944, which is only found elsewhere in Pictish sculpture on the ninth-century St. Vigean's No. 12.<sup>394</sup> Similar broad internal projections appear on the slightly sunken surfaces within two large bosses on the east face of St. John's cross, one on the top arm and the other on the right arm, whose outer surfaces are decorated with spiral ornament (pl. 37). A metalwork analogy is provided by the spiral decoration of the circular settings for two amber bosses on the Londesborough Brooch in the British Museum, which David Wilson believes was "certainly made outside the area influenced by the St. Ninian's Isle series", in view of its Irish pin-head and pseudo-penannular terminals, although it has the hoop panel seen on brooches of the St. Ninian's Isle type.<sup>395</sup> A West Highland origin would not be unreasonable for the Londesborough Brooch. Spiral ornament in the upper register on the sides of the Steeple Bumpstead boss also encircles the central setting.<sup>396</sup> The Londesborough Brooch and the Steeple Bumpstead boss would both seem to be of Gaelic origin. The sides of one of the three silver cones from the St. Ninian's Isle

treasure, No. 14, bears engraved spiral ornament and the spiral decoration of its rounded tip and that of another cone, No. 13, is suggestive of a relationship with the Nigg boss described above, but neither cone has a central setting with additional protruberances.<sup>397</sup> Tarbat No. 6 and, to a lesser extent, the Nigg boss are comparable to bosses on St. John's cross. The interlace decoration found on the sides of bosses carved at Nigg and in the Iona School is more appropriate to sculpture than to metalwork, but Iona School bosses with spiral decoration on the sides and internal projections evoke metalwork comparisons. The Iona Inventory attributes to metalwork influence the roundels enclosing smaller circles on the "eight circles" carpet page (fol. 33R) in the Book of Kells and Dr. Edwards detects a relationship between the same carpet page, metalwork and the Ahenny "nailhead" bosses.<sup>398</sup> For the time being, a metalwork origin for "birds' nest" bosses seems plausible, at least until Dr. Henderson has explained her ideas more fully.

### Spiral Ornament

Large areas of spiral ornament are carved on St. Oran's, St. John's, the Kildalton, Keills, and Kilnave crosses, but spiral ornament serves in a minor capacity on St. Martin's cross. The essential elements of the most common form of spiral composition on Iona School crosses comprise four bosses or roundels grouped around a central spiral cluster, boss or roundel and set within a rectangular space. Open-jawed serpents link the four major spiral-decorated roundels on the front of the top arm of St. Oran's cross (pls. 32-4) to four smaller spiral bosses which are separated into two pairs by back-to-back C-curves. An additional register filled with spiral ornament at the top of the arm pushes the four roundels off-centre and is approximately

equal in height to the constricted area at the bottom, thus placing the four spiral bosses carved between the four roundels at the centre of the cross arm. The squared ends of the side arms on the opposite face of St. Oran's cross (pl. 36) display four bosses linked by trumpet spirals to four smaller bosses, which are connected in pairs by C-curves. The large panel on the upper part of the Kilnave cross shaft (pl. 48) is now badly damaged but was originally almost identical to the bottom panel on the shaft of the Keills cross (pls. 44, 47): four corner roundels linked by trumpet spirals to a central cluster of flat spiral bosses connected by C-curves.<sup>399</sup> Four spiral-decorated roundels are placed around the central boss on the east face of the top arm of St. John's cross (pl. 37). The spiral-decorated panels on the ends of the side arms on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38) feature four corner bosses and a central "birds' nest" boss. The spiral decoration on the east face of the Kildalton cross shaft includes four corner roundels and a large central spiral roundel (pl. 39).

Spiral compositions of four roundels set around a central roundel or spiral cluster derive from Insular manuscript illumination. Four corner spiral roundels are grouped around two vertically-arranged larger central spiral roundels on the Book of Durrow Celtic carpet page, fol. 3V.<sup>400</sup> A large spiral-decorated roundel is set between four corner roundels on a carpet page in the Turin Gospel fragment.<sup>401</sup> Four small spiral roundels, connected in pairs by trumpet spirals forming C-curves, are placed amidst larger four-roundel groupings at the bottom of the initial I on fol. 193 in the Book of Durrow and between the concave ends of the two right arms of the Chi on the Book of Kells Chi-Rho page.<sup>402</sup>

The compositions of the spiral panels at the bottom of the shaft on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38) and on the top arm of

the Kilnave cross (pls. 48-9) are more complex. The "cruciform arrangement of paired bosses, diminishing in size from the centre to the extremities" on the St. John's panel is outlined by four pairs of bosses linked by peltae.<sup>403</sup> Henry compared it to the spiral decoration of the Chi-Rho page in the Book of Kells.<sup>404</sup> Indeed, the concave ends of the two right arms of the Chi function as peltae linking two roundels, enclosing smaller roundels connected by C-curves in the interspaces, in the manner of the four paired bosses linked by peltae on St. John's cross. Two vertical pairs of flat spiral bosses are linked by peltae placed back-to-back in the centre of the Kilnave panel and are linked in turn by peltae and trumpet spirals to other flat bosses. The Royal Commission relate the Kilnave panel to spiral passages in the Book of Kells.<sup>405</sup>

Rings of spiral ornament are carved around the centres of the cross head on both sides of St. John's cross, on the east face of St. Martin's cross and on the Kilnave cross. Trumpet spirals appear to have linked the ten or twelve original bosses on the fragmentary ring on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37).<sup>406</sup> The Iona Inventory relates the smooth surface of the twelve roundels linked by voluted trumpet spirals in the ring on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38) to the chip-carved spiral ornament on the Ahenny crosses in Ireland.<sup>407</sup> It is also reminiscent of the openwork spirals on the backs of the St. Germain objects (pls. 51-2). The nine small bosses in the ring on St. Martin's cross are "separated" by trumpet spirals with single volutes (pl. 43),<sup>408</sup> although the bosses might also be seen as larger, linking volutes. Three peltae radiating from the central depression on the Kilnave cross head (pl. 48) were originally connected by "spiral whorls" attached to three large voluted trumpet spirals.<sup>409</sup> The decoration of the spiral disc on the south arm of the Kilnave cross

is similar, with the orientation of the peltae and voluted trumpet spirals reversed.

The Iona School developed voluted trumpet spirals for use in relief sculpture. Trumpet spirals with two volutes, one volute left otherwise unattached and the other volute functioning as a member of a pair of bosses linked by peltae or C-curves, are carved on the large decorative zone on the upper part of the front of St. Oran's cross shaft (pl. 32); the top arm and at the top of the upper shaft panel on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37, 37B but not 37D); the bottom shaft panel and the side arms on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38); the spiral panels on both sides of the Kildalton cross shaft (pls. 39, 41); and the spiral panels on the shafts of the Keills and Kilnave crosses (pls. 44, 47, 48). The worn surfaces of the free volutes create the impression that they originally lacked surface decoration, but the better-preserved spiral ornament on the top arm of the Kilnave cross (pl. 49) may give us some idea of their original appearance. Despite their worn appearance, however, it is clear that the volutes formed solid, rounded protruberances, regardless of their internal composition.

Voluted trumpet spirals have a long history in Celtic art.<sup>410</sup> The motif derived from the classical palmette and appeared in the form of a "fan", with narrow forerunners of volutes, in the Waldalgesheim Style, Jacobsthal's second phase of Continental La Tène art, beginning in the fourth century B.C. Examples are provided by the shape of two bronze plaques from Comacchio in northern Italy and the decoration of a bronze crescent from Bruun am Steinfeld in Austria.<sup>411</sup> Sir Cyril Fox traced the development of the "fan" into a "domed trumpet" in British La Tène art.<sup>412</sup> More recently, H. E. Kilbride-Jones has given the name "Lotus-Bud Motif" to Continental, British and Irish variations of



the type, including examples on the Torrs pony-cap and another on the Turoe Stone in Galway, which features one attached and one free volute.<sup>413</sup> When the motif re-appeared on hanging-bowl escutcheons and related Irish metalwork in the sixth and seventh centuries,<sup>414</sup> it served as a linking device between spiral roundels and took the form of three or four trumpets fitted together at one end to form a single "volute", with one trumpet connected to a roundel serving as the stem, and the other "volute" taking the form of a spiral coil or roundel. The same openwork trumpet composition is found in manuscripts beginning with the Book of Durrow Celtic carpet page.<sup>415</sup>

The voluted trumpet spirals of the Iona School which have one attached and one free volute follow in a Gaelic sculptural tradition. Earlier examples are found in Ireland on the Turoe stone and the Kilfountain pillar in Kerry, which is roughly datable to c. 700 and features a pair of incised voluted trumpet spirals, with one volute of each connected by a C-scroll and the other two volutes left free.<sup>416</sup> The motif was further developed for rectangular spiral compositions by the Iona School and was later used in Ireland on a cross fragment in Downpatrick cathedral<sup>417</sup> and at the bottom of the shaft on the south side of the broken Kells West cross.<sup>418</sup> No equivalent form is found in Pictish sculpture. All of the spiral bosses in two of the finest Pictish spiral compositions, the rectangular panels in the bottom corners on the front of the Nigg slab (pls. 54, 57-8), are connected to two other bosses, however distantly, and none is left free in the manner of the voluted trumpet spirals of the Iona School.

#### Animal Ornament

The figures of animals serve as decorative features on Iona School crosses. Some appear to derive from metalwork. Each of the

constrictions of the side arms on the east face of St. John's cross and the upper arm on both sides seem to have originally borne four small pairs of animals (pls. 37-8),<sup>419</sup> perhaps in imitation of figures cast separately and applied to the flat surfaces of metalwork objects, although no contemporary Insular parallels readily suggest themselves. The four pairs of animals grouped around the central boss on the third panel from the bottom on the west face of St. John's cross belong to the same milieu, as do the two long-necked outward-facing quadrupeds that support the winged figure on the top arm of the Kells cross (pls. 44, 46). The Iona Inventory describes the figures on the constrictions of the side arms on the west face of St. John's cross (pl. 38) as the "entwined heads of serpents",<sup>420</sup> an echo of the serpents and bosses motif. The four "lizard-like beasts" carved on the sides of the central boss on the east face of the Kildalton cross head (pl. 39) are also reminiscent of metalwork. Four creatures on the sides of the Steeple Bumpstead boss have similar blunt heads, although their hind legs are placed next to their bodies, not splayed around the base of the boss in the manner of the Kildalton beasts.<sup>421</sup>

Two confronted birds peck at a bunch of grapes between them on the constriction of the upper arm on the east face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 39).<sup>422</sup> The scene derives from Northumbrian inhabited vinescroll compositions, although the Iona School sculptor chose to omit the vine. The Royal Commission compares the Kildalton birds to the two peacocks standing in vines growing from vases, which flank the head of Christ in the Portrait of Christ in the Book of Kells.<sup>423</sup> The motif might have reached Iona in the form of decorated metalwork. Nibbling birds turned to face each other appear in the vinescrolls on the Ormside Bowl and the right arm of the Bischofshofen cross, two eighth-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork objects, and confronted birds peck at leaves in the vinescroll

on the shaft of the Bischofshofen cross.<sup>424</sup> The motif was well-established in Northumbrian sculpture by the mid-eighth century. One of the two confronted birds on the early Jarrow frieze fragment is now headless, but the other pecks at the berries growing on the vinescroll. Two birds turn to face each other while pecking at fruit in the vinescroll on the Jedburgh fragment. The prominent beaks and feet of the confronted birds in the vinescroll on the late eighth-century cross shaft from Croft in Yorkshire are particularly comparable to those of the Kildalton birds.<sup>425</sup>

Leonine beasts are carved on four Iona School crosses. The two rampant lions on the top arm of St. Oran's cross are shown back to back, their heads turned towards each other, while biting the ends of each other's tails, which are twisted together (pls. 32-4).<sup>426</sup> The three pairs of lions on the west face of the top arm of St. Martin's cross (pl. 42) are similar, although the two lions in the middle bite their own tails.<sup>427</sup> The two upper lions on the side arms of the Keills cross (pls. 44, 46) turn their heads to bite the tails of the lions below, which are intertwined with their own. Pairs of confronted rampant lions are carved in the spaces above and below the boss on the top arm on the east face of St. Martin's cross, where the two lower lions bite the tails of the lions above them (pl. 43).<sup>428</sup> Most of these lions probably derive from manuscript illumination. The Book of Kells provides a number of examples, including backwards-turning lions in the arches over the Canon Tables on fols. 3R and 5R, a lion biting its own tail in a line of text on fol. 66R and a rearing lion on the four symbols page, fol. 27V.<sup>429</sup> The lions on the constrictions of the arms on the west face of the Kildalton cross have lost their heads (pl. 41). The lions on the side arms are seen from the side and may also depend upon manuscripts. The Lion of St. Mark in the Book of

Durrow, for example, curls its tail above its back in the same manner as the Kildalton lions,<sup>430</sup> but there is no additional evidence to suggest that the Kildalton lions functioned as Evangelist symbols. The now headless lions on the upper and lower arms of Kildalton are seen from above and face towards the top of the cross, the left hind leg of the upper one and the tails of both mingling with the surrounding interlace.<sup>431</sup> Both are somewhat suggestive of metalwork. The bent hind legs of the lower lion lie next to its body, as do those of the creatures on the Steeple Bumpstead boss. Plastic animals are seen from above against an interlace background on a probably late eighth-century lozenge-shaped plate found in a ninth-century grave at Meløy in Norway.<sup>432</sup>

Three animals with elongated necks on Iona School crosses suggest a connexion with Mercian art. The beast on the left arm on the west face of St. Martin's cross has a curved, somewhat elongated neck with a small face turned towards the viewer (pl. 42).<sup>433</sup> Professor Cramp relates a similar creature on a frieze panel at Breedon on the Hill in Leicestershire to Byzantine textiles.<sup>434</sup> The two pairs of animals on the central panel on the Keills cross shaft (pls. 44-5) are connected by interlace springing from the tails of the lower beasts and the legs of the upper ones. The two lower animals, affronted long-necked "cats" with drilled eyeholes turned to face the viewer, are comparable to a pair of similar animals in a vinescroll frieze on the south wall of the chancel at Breedon.<sup>435</sup> Affronted griffins with elongated necks and feline heads turned to the viewer, their hindquarters forming interlace patterns, are carved on the Hedda Stone at Peterborough and on the related Gandersheim Casket.<sup>436</sup> Clapham dated the Breedon frieze to the second half of the eighth century and Cramp would date the Hedda Stone and the Gandersheim Casket no later than the early ninth

century.<sup>437</sup> Isabel Henderson has called attention to the relationship between Mercian sculpture and Pictish relief sculpture at St. Andrews, Hilton of Cadboll and Nigg,<sup>438</sup> but long-necked "cats" are not found in Pictish sculpture and the Keills "cats" suggest direct contact between Mercia and Iona, without Pictish intervention. The legs of the animals above the boss on the west face of the top arm of the Kildalton cross merge with the interlace springing from the tails of the animals below the boss (pl. 41), a feature which may have something in common with the griffins on the Hedda Stone and the Gandersheim Casket, although the heads of the Kildalton animals are less comparable to Mercian work.

### Christian Iconography

The sculpture of the Iona School displays an interest in Christian figural iconography from its inception. The earliest surviving Iona School cross, St. Oran's, has suffered too much damage for its iconographic scheme to be reconstructed, but variations of its Virgin and Child scene are carved on St. Martin's and the Kildalton cross. Most of the remaining figural scenes on St. Martin's and Kildalton are drawn from the Old Testament, with the possible exception of the bottom line of figures on the west face of St. Martin's cross. The iconography of the Keills cross appears to depend upon a variety of sources, including the Life of St. Anthony and Apocryphal material. The iconography of the Iona School is a potentially vast subject and the following discussion is only intended to suggest some of the possible sources available to the Iona School, without exhaustively examining the various layers of meaning to be derived from the figural scenes.

### The Virgin and Child

The Virgin and Child are placed in a focal position on three Iona

School crosses. The Iona Inventory notes that the earliest Iona School image of the Virgin and Child, on St. Oran's cross (pl. 32, 35), shares two features with the Virgin and Child miniature in the Book of Kells: the Virgin is nimbed but not the Child and the Child touches His mother's breast with one hand.<sup>439</sup> The St. Oran's Virgin and Child are flanked by two angels with wings raised to form a canopy and the angel on the left is nimbed. The two upper angels in the Kells miniatures have coiffures suggestive of haloes and each of the two lower angels raise one wing towards the Virgin and Child.<sup>440</sup> Both Virgin and Child face the viewer on St. Oran's cross, in contrast to the Kells miniature, where the Child turns His face to His mother and the Virgin turns her legs to the side. The inner wings of the angels on the Kildalton scene (pls. 39-40) also form a canopy over the head of the Virgin, who is viewed frontally, as is the St. Oran's Virgin,<sup>441</sup> although the Kildalton Child tilts His head back to look at His mother and His face may originally have been seen in a three-quarters view. The Virgin is set in a roundel and seen from the front on St. Martin's cross (pl. 42)<sup>442</sup> with her Child shown in profile in the manner of the Child in the Book of Kells. They are attended by four angels and the upper two angels provide a canopy with their wings. In each of the Iona School scenes, the Child's legs are placed across the Virgin's lap, with the Child on His mother's left.

Interest in depictions of the Virgin developed independently at Iona and in Northumbria. We know from Bede that Benedict Biscop obtained a painting of the Virgin for Monkwearmouth on a trip to Rome which began c. 676, but Biscop apparently did not return before 679.<sup>443</sup> Adomnán provides a background to the Virgin imagery of the Iona School with his account of Arculf's story of the maltreatment suffered by an



icon of the Virgin in Constantinople in De Locis Sanctis, which was probably written between 683 and 686,<sup>444</sup> before Adomán met Ceolfrith and had an opportunity to see the Monkwearmouth picture. Curiously, Bede did not repeat the story in his own adaptation of De Locis Sanctis, an omission J. M. Wallace-Hadrill once attributed to "the early rumblings of the iconoclast controversy", but Dom Paul Meyvaert has pointed out that Bede defended the use of images in his tract on Solomon's Temple.<sup>445</sup> Nonetheless, the cult of the Virgin seems to have met with a warmer reception at Iona than in Northumbria.

Cú-chuimne of Iona wrote a hymn to the Virgin before his death in 747 and the Virgin and Child are carved on three Iona School crosses. The Virgin and Child scene carved on St. Cuthbert's wooden coffin at Lindisfarne c. 698 is the only known Northumbrian version earlier than the ninth-century Dewsbury cross-shaft fragment, which shows the Virgin holding the Child, with both figures facing the viewer.<sup>446</sup>

The Virgin and Child scene on Cuthbert's coffin has little in common with the Iona School versions, although the Child faces the viewer, as He does on St. Oran's cross. In his study of Cuthbert's coffin, Ernst Kitzinger points out that the legs of the Virgin and Child are shown in "complementary profiles" on the coffin and in the Kells miniature, although the Lindisfarne Child does not make the tender gesture of the Child in miniature,<sup>447</sup> or, one might add, of the Child on St. Oran's cross. Instead, the Child on the coffin raises His right hand in benediction and holds a scroll in His left. The Iona School scenes place the Child's head to His mother's left and His legs across her lap, in the manner of the Lindisfarne carving, which shows the Virgin seated but without a throne. The Iona School sculptors were capable of showing enthroned figures in profile and did so in an unidentified scene on the right arm on the back of St. Oran's cross

(pl. 36), but the Iona School Virgins are depicted frontally. The Virgin appears to have a throne on St. Oran's cross but the same cannot be said of Kildalton or St. Martin's cross.

Kitzinger relates the Child touching His mother's breast in the Kells miniature to the Eleousa or Tender Virgin, an eastern type whose earliest clear example is an ivory carving in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, which shows the seated Virgin from the front, holding the Child across her body while he clasps her neck and presses His cheek to hers.<sup>448</sup> The Baltimore ivory is usually thought to be ninth or tenth-century Coptic work, although it has also been attributed to Alexandria in the mid-seventh century.<sup>449</sup> The Eleousa may lie behind the "complementary profiles" of Cuthbert's coffin and the Kells miniature, but it is even more clearly reflected in two of the Iona School carvings: St. Oran's cross, where the faces of the Virgin and Child are in close proximity and the Child touches His mother's breast, and St. Martin's cross, on which the Child's forehead is placed against His mother's chin. Kitzinger would not attribute the Kells miniature to Coptic influence, but instead derives it and the Baltimore ivory from an earlier Byzantine prototype.<sup>450</sup>

Martin Werner, on the other hand, derives the Kells miniature from a Coptic source, which he calls "a kind of proto-Eleousa", and calls attention to the angels making canopies of their wings over the Virgin's head on the Baltimore ivory, a related Coptic ivory in Milan, a seventh-century stone carving at Thalin in Armenia, and in a Coptic manuscript dated to 893 in the Pierpont Morgan Library.<sup>451</sup> Of these, only the Baltimore ivory is of the Eleousa type. The others are all versions of the seated Hodegetria, which shows the Virgin frontally, the Child seated on one of her knees while facing the viewer with one hand raised in benediction, the other usually holding a scroll, in

the manner of the Child on Cuthbert's coffin. The canopy of wings may have originated in Constantinople. The wings of the angels on the Baltimore and Milan ivories frame the Virgin's head in the manner of the angels' wings in a seated Hodegetria on a mid-sixth century ivory diptych from Constantinople now in Berlin.<sup>452</sup> Canopied wings are more clearly evident in the Iona School carvings than in the Kells miniature, but the miniature and the Iona carvings place the Child's legs across both of His mother's knees, in contrast to the seated Hodegetria. The Child's gesture towards His mother's breast in the Kells miniature and on St. Oran's cross could derive from the Child's benediction in the Hodegetria, but the Hodegetria cannot account for the other signs of tenderness seen in the Iona School carvings.

Werner suggests that the Kells miniature represents a stage in the evolutionary process which, he proposes, led from the Hodegetria to the Eleousa and took place in Coptic Egypt.<sup>453</sup> Kitzinger, however, rejects a Coptic model for the Insular scenes and attributes the modelling of the legs of the Virgin in the Kells miniature and the drapery of the Kells and Lindisfarne figures to a model stylistically comparable to the Virgin and Child in the Adoration of the Magi scene in a mosaic of Pope John VII (705-707 A.D.) from Old St. Peter's in Rome.<sup>454</sup> The folds of the Kildalton Virgin's dress are still discernible<sup>455</sup> and the legs of the Virgins and angels in the Kildalton and St. Oran's scenes are naturalistically apparent under their long tunics, whereas only the right knees of the seated Virgins are readily distinguishable on the Coptic ivories in Baltimore and Milan. The modelling of the Iona School figures has more in common with the mosaic of John VII than with the stylized Virgins found in Coptic art.

Kitzinger and Per Jonas Nordhagen derive the Kells miniature from early versions of the Eleousa, without recourse to an evolutionary

phase between the Hodegetria and the Eleousa.<sup>456</sup> Kitzinger derives the miniature and the coffin carving from a single common model in Northumbria, although the Child's hands in the miniature are more closely dependent upon the model, and argues that the Lindisfarne woodcarver, "or one of his predecessors", turned the face of the Child towards the viewer with His right hand raised in benediction and His left holding a scroll, "the conventional attitude in representations of the adult Saviour",<sup>457</sup> which is seen in a Northumbrian context on the Bewcastle cross. The benediction and scroll are, however, attributes of the seated Hodegetria seen, for example, on the sixth-century diptych in Berlin. The Lindisfarne woodcarver must have suppressed the angels in the model if the scenes on the coffin, the Iona School crosses and in the manuscript all descend from the same common model. We know from Bede that there was an image of the Virgin in Northumbria at Monkwearmouth, but we do not know whether the Monkwearmouth painting included the Child or whether it was a seated Hodegetria, which could account for the Child's benediction and scroll on Cuthbert's coffin, or an early version of the Eleousa, which might explain the "complementary profiles" of the coffin carving which are reflected in the Kells miniature. The Child on St. Oran's cross touches His mother's breast and holds His face close to hers. The faces of the Virgin and Child touch on St. Martin's cross. The Kildalton Child seems to look up at His mother. The Iona School scenes have a greater claim to knowledge of the Tender Virgin than the Lindisfarne woodcarving. Adomnán expresses an interest in icons in De Locis Sanctis and one can only wonder what else he and Ceolfrith discussed besides the Easter controversy, or what gifts Adomnán took back to Iona.

Kitzinger invoked the mosaic of Pope John VII from Old St. Peter's

as an example of a Hellenizing phase of Roman art produced under Greek influence in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>458</sup> Frescoes of the Virgin were painted during this phase in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome, where John VII preserved a seventh-century fresco in a niche in the nave of the Hodegetria type, with both Virgin and Child shown en face, and added frescoes of the Virgin with donors and the Virgin and Child, of which only part of the inscription now survives.<sup>459</sup> Nordhagen has also identified the battered remains of a standing Eleousa on a column in the nave, which he dates to c. 650.<sup>460</sup> As Kitzinger points out, any Insular traveller to Rome in the seventh or eighth century may have been exposed to the "Hellenistic qualities of style and sentiment" which affected the Kells miniature<sup>461</sup> and, one should add, the Iona School carvings.

The Iona School may have acquired some knowledge of these Roman developments after Benedict Biscop brought back his painting of the Virgin from Rome. John VII added a fresco of Daniel in the Lions' Den beneath the seventh-century Virgin and Child fresco in the niche in S. Maria Antiqua, which shows Daniel standing with his arms together in front of him. One small surviving lion is seated and turns back to look up at Daniel while a standing ecclesiastic to the left, perhaps intended for John VII, adores the Virgin and Child above.<sup>462</sup> The Daniel in the Lions' Den scene on St. Martin's cross is also placed immediately beneath the Virgin and Child on the west face of the cross (pl. 42).

#### Daniel in the Lions' Den

The two Daniel in the Lions' Den scenes on Iona School crosses depend upon different sources but reflect the same theme of deliverance described in the Epilogue to the Martyrology of Oengus in the lines:

"Save me O Jesus... as Thou didst save Daniel out of the lions' den".<sup>463</sup>

The seated Daniel on St. Martin's cross raises his right hand in front of him and touches the muzzle of the lion to his left with his left hand. The two lions stand on their hind legs and place their forepaws on Daniel's knees. The Iona Inventory suggests that the "irregular lump" in the upper right might be the head of a third animal.<sup>464</sup> The seated Daniel touching the lion to his left might have depended upon Byzantine textiles related to the shroud of St. Victor, which arrived at Sens in 769 but could be a century or so older and shows Daniel holding the manes of the rearing lions on either side. Daniel's legs are spaced apart on the shroud and the treatment of his costume over his knees might have suggested a seated figure.<sup>465</sup>

The two lower lions on the side arms on the Keills cross lick the face of the seated figure at the top of the shaft (pls. 44, 46). Romilly Allen identified the scene as Daniel in the Lions' Den and a seated Daniel is also shown between two lions on the Kilree cross in Kilkenny.<sup>466</sup> The Keills Daniel raises his right hand in blessing and holds a book in his left. The face-licking lions derive from a humbler source than Byzantine textiles. Sixteen of the thirty-six late sixth and seventh-century Burgundian Daniel buckles catalogued by Herbert Kuhn show the lions licking Daniel's feet.<sup>467</sup> Following Bishop Besson and Sir Martin Conway, Kuhn and Wilhelm Holmqvist attributed the motif to Coptic influence, citing the Egyptian pilgrims' flasks which show camels licking the feet of St. Menas.<sup>468</sup> Nils Åberg preferred a Byzantine origin for the Burgundian motif, in view of the lions licking Daniel's feet on a Byzantine mount in the Musée du Carnavalet.<sup>469</sup> Kuhn noted that twenty Burgundian Daniel buckles have been found in the Vaud Canton, including nine of the sixteen with feet-licking lions, two of which have inscriptions naming



Daniel (pl. 59a), while another three are inscribed IONAS IASO (pl. 59b), which is thought to mean "Jonah, Jesus".<sup>470</sup> The monastery at Romainmôtier in the Vaud Canton was re-founded within the paruchia of Columbanus under the probably Irish abbot Siagrius c. 630.<sup>471</sup> We also know of two church councils held at Chalons-sur-Saône, the Burgundian capital, one addressed in a letter by Columbanus in 603, the other convened at the order of Charlemagne in 813, the latter of which condemned the activities of Irish churchmen,<sup>472</sup> who were apparently active in Burgundy throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. The lions licking the face of the seated Daniel on the Keills cross probably depend upon Burgundian Daniel buckles or their sources and the motif may have travelled to Iona via the paruchia of Columbanus.

A standing figure on the constriction of the left arm on the front of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32) appears to hold the raised forepaw of the animal on his left. The Iona Inventory suggests that the scene might depict Daniel in the Lions' Den or, possibly, David Killing the Lion, although the "absence of any conflict" argues against the latter.<sup>473</sup>

### David Iconography

David iconography on Iona School crosses is limited to David Killing the Lion on the Kildalton cross and seated figures playing harps on St. Oran's and St. Martin's crosses. The east face of the top arm of Kildalton features two angels above a figure reaching across his body with his right arm to grasp the jaw of the beast on his left, which attacks him with a forepaw (pl. 39). The Royal Commission identifies the horned animal above the beast's back as a sheep and the scene as David Killing the Lion.<sup>474</sup> The Kildalton carving seems to derive from Pictish versions of the scene. Standing Davids rend the

jaws of the lions on their left, which attack with their forepaws, on the St. Andrews Sarcophagus, a stylistically related fragment from Kinnedar in the Elgin Museum and on the back of Aberlemno No. 3.<sup>475</sup> The type is almost unknown in Ireland<sup>476</sup> and the Kildalton scene probably reflects the influence of Pictish sculpture or illustrated Psalters of a type known in Pictland.

A single figure, who may be David, on the constriction of the left arm on the back of St. Oran's cross is seated on the ground with his legs stretched out in front of him, playing a harp (pl. 36).<sup>477</sup> The figure's position is unusual but not unique in Insular art. Harpers are similarly seated on one of the Carndonagh pillars in Donegal<sup>478</sup> and on the Ardchattan slab in Argyll (pl. 78).

Another harper is shown in the same position in the second register below Daniel in the Lions' Den on the west face of St. Martin's cross, facing a kneeling figure who accompanies him on a triple pipe (pl. 42). The Iona Inventory suggests that the rectangular object between them could be either a drum or a "book marking David as author of the psalms".<sup>479</sup> Ian Fisher and F. A. Greenhill identify as a "barrel drum" an object carved between a harper and a triple pipe-player on a tenth-century slab at Tower of Lethendy, Perthshire and suggest that the pipe and drum may reflect native taste, rather than an imported artistic source, in light of the pagan associations of reed and percussion instruments, which were viewed askance by the early church.<sup>480</sup> A triple pipe-player also appears on the Ardchattan slab. The Iona Inventory relates the David seated on the ground on St. Martin's cross to the "rural scene of David the shepherd" but the Byzantine examples cited depict David playing the harp al fresco while comfortably seated on an appropriate natural feature of the landscape.<sup>481</sup> The harpers sitting on the ground on the two Iona

crosses, the Carndonagh pillar and the Ardchattan slab may reflect a native custom which is depicted centuries later in a woodcut in John Derricke's 1581 Image of Ireland, which shows a harper seated on the ground with his legs straight out in front of him, accompanying a poet who recites while he stands.

### The Sacrifice of Abraham

The Sacrifice of Abraham is depicted on two Iona School crosses. In the register below the Daniel scene on the west face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 42), the central figure of Abraham holds a sword in his right hand and Isaac's forelock in his left, while Isaac seems to place something on the low altar between them. The Iona Inventory identifies the small figure to the left as the angel who stopped the sacrifice and notes the absence of the ram shown in Irish versions of the scene on the Castledermot North and South crosses, Monasterboice West and the Durrow cross.<sup>482</sup> Both angel and ram are omitted on the right arm on the east face of Kildalton (pl. 39), where Abraham also holds a sword across his right shoulder and takes Isaac by the hair, while Isaac places something on the altar between them.<sup>483</sup>

Depictions of the Sacrifice of Abraham could have reached Iona in several different guises. The scene was commonly used in Early Christian art as a prefiguration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection and is shown in third and fourth-century Roman catacomb paintings<sup>484</sup> and fourth-century sarcophagi.<sup>485</sup> The scene is also shown on portable objects of a type which might have reached Iona, such as a fourth-century earthenware bowl from Tunisia and a fifth-century ivory pyxis made in Syria or Palestine,<sup>486</sup> although we can form only an imprecise idea of the appearance of the scene in fifth- and sixth-century eastern manuscripts. The fifth or sixth-century Cotton Genesis was reduced to

charred fragments in the Ashburnham House fire of 1731, but a relationship is thought to exist between it and a set of eleventh-century Italian ivory plaques in Salerno cathedral, which includes a depiction of the Sacrifice.<sup>487</sup> Only a quarter of the sixth-century Vienna Genesis survives, including scenes from the Life of Isaac, but it has lost any illustration of the Sacrifice of Abraham.<sup>488</sup> The scene is perhaps most likely to have reached the British Isles in a set of paired images relating Old and New Testament scenes, a scheme at least as old as the fifth-century wooden doors of S. Sabina in Rome.<sup>489</sup> We know of at least one such set in an Insular context, brought to Jarrow by Benedict Biscop, which included a painting of Isaac carrying wood for his sacrifice paired with another of Christ carrying His cross,<sup>490</sup> but the sacrificial scene attracted no sculptural interest in Anglo-Saxon England.

#### Cain and Abel

The Royal Commission suggests that the scene on the left arm on the east face of Kildalton (pl. 39) is a conflation of images of Cain murdering Abel and Abel making his perfect sacrifice to the Lord.<sup>491</sup> The kneeling Abel is unique. Abel stands in the murder scenes on a number of Irish crosses, including the Kells Tower and Market crosses and the Muiredach Cross at Monasterboice.<sup>492</sup> Abel's sacrifice and death were seen as prefigurations of Christ's death but artistic representations were usually restricted to the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, as in the lost fourth-century mosaics in S. Costanza in Rome, or Abel's perfect sacrifice, shown in sixth and seventh-century mosaics in Ravenna.<sup>493</sup> The possibility of a manuscript source for the Kildalton scene, which included depictions of both the sacrifice and the murder, is suggested by a Cotton Genesis fragment showing the

Birth of Abel and a full-page miniature of the Cain and Abel story in the Ashburnham Pentateuch, a late sixth or seventh-century Latin manuscript probably made in Spain or North Africa.<sup>494</sup>

The Royal Commission notes that both the Cain and Abel and Sacrifice of Abraham scenes on the Kildalton cross are prefigurations of the Passion suggestive of Eucharistic symbolism,<sup>495</sup> but David Killing the Lion on the same face of Kildalton is more appropriate to the theme of deliverance. The Epilogue to the Martyrology of Oengus gives Isaac's escape from sacrifice as an example of deliverance,<sup>496</sup> so the Sacrifice of Abraham may serve to link Cain and Abel and David Killing the Lion at Kildalton.

#### The Bottom Register of Figures on St. Martin's Cross

The bottom register of figures on the west face of St. Martin's cross (pl. 42) shows, from the left, a slightly crouching figure touching his face with one hand, a standing figure with upraised right arm and another standing figure reaching down to a seated figure on the right. The Iona Inventory suggests that the two figures on the left might be Samuel anointing David, but notes that the "apparently grief-stricken pose" of the left-hand figure argues against such an interpretation.<sup>497</sup> The hand-to-face gesture of the figure on the left is distinctive and is associated in Early Christian art with Peter's response to Christ Foretelling Peter's Denial. The scene is usually, but not always accompanied by a cock on fourth-century sarcophagi.<sup>498</sup> The gesture and the cock are included in a sixth-century mosaic of the Foretelling in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, which is separate from the mosaic of the Denial.<sup>499</sup> Peter makes the gesture in the Denial scene on the fourth-century Brescia Casket, which includes the cock.<sup>500</sup> The gesture of the left-hand figure on

St. Martin's cross may help us to identify the two figures on the right. Peter stands in the Denial scenes in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo and on the Brescia Casket, but he is shown seated to the right of the servant girl, who gestures downwards to him, in the Denial on a fifth-century Roman ivory plaque in the British Museum.<sup>501</sup> The two figures on the right on St. Martin's cross might thus be the servant girl and a seated Peter, although the standing figure lacks the long hair or veil of other female figures in Insular art, but the Virgin on St. Martin's cross has neither long hair nor a veil. No cock is shown in the St. Martin's register, but the Iona School also omitted the ram in the Sacrifice of Abraham. The four figures on St. Martin's cross may never be successfully identified and the interpretation given here is only offered tentatively.

#### The Keills Cross

The iconography of the Keills cross (pl. 44) may unite an Evangelist symbol, apocryphal material, Daniel in the Lions' Den, and the Temptation of St. Anthony in a unique conflation. The winged figure on the top arm (pl. 46) has been identified as an angel and as St. Michael trampling a serpent,<sup>502</sup> but it has no arms or hands, as do the angels above David Killing the Lion on the Kildalton cross (pl. 39) or the angels in the Virgin and Child scenes on Kildalton and St. Oran's cross (pl. 35). The Keills figure has a beak, visible in White's 1875 drawing<sup>503</sup> and should therefore be identified as the Eagle symbol of St. John the Evangelist. The Eagle trampling the serpent is a reference to the Oratio Sancti Iohannis, the prayer John offered before drinking the poison given him by Aristodemus, pagan Pontifex of Ephesus, an incident recounted in two Apocryphal texts, the Apostolic History by Pseudo-Abdias, which was probably written in



southern Gaul in the seventh or eighth century, and the Passio Sancti Iohannis by Pseudo-Mellitus, which depended upon Pseudo-Abdias.<sup>504</sup>

The story was known in the Gaelic world by c. 800, when the Martyrology of Oengus alluded to it in the lines: "Save me O Jesus from every evil as Thou didst save John from the serpent's poison".<sup>505</sup>

The human head on the end of a line of interlace held between the jaws of two opposing quadrupeds on the Keills cross shaft (pl. 45) may be an experimental depiction of the Temptation of St. Anthony, who was beset by demons in the forms of lions, bulls, wolves, asps, serpents, scorpions, and bears.<sup>506</sup> The story was known at Iona.

Several passages in Adomnán's Life of Columba were taken directly from Evagrius's Latin translation of Athanasius's Life of St. Anthony.<sup>507</sup>

Francoise Henry accepted Kingsley Porter's identification of several scenes on Irish crosses, which show a standing male figure between two animal-headed figures, as depictions of the Temptation of

St. Anthony.<sup>508</sup> Helen Roe, however, has argued that the Irish carvings and a related scene on a Pictish slab at Kettins in Angus illustrate pagan ceremonies involving the wearing of animal skins, but the additional pictorial examples she cites all belong to an earlier Germanic context.<sup>509</sup>

The rather loose interlace on the Kettins slab is probably no earlier than the ninth century and the Kettins scene may be a Pictish borrowing of the Irish anthropomorphic type. The Keills version was probably thought to be too decorative and was replaced by the standardized scene in Ireland and Pictland.

The borders of the Keills cross shaft terminate on either side in an open-jawed serpent's head with extended tongue set against the seated figure at the top of the shaft, who unites the iconography of the cross (pl. 46). Licked by the lions in the side arms, he is Daniel in the Lions' Den. Paired with the Eagle on the top arm while

holding a book, he is the Evangelist John, who survived the serpent's poison. Gripped in the open jaws of the creatures who border the shaft, he is Anthony plagued by the demons of eremitic life. The theme is one of deliverance with the Help of God.

### Dating

The date in the middle or the second half of the eighth century proposed by the Royal Commission for the Iona School crosses is preferable to Dr. Stevenson's early ninth-century date, which is supported by Dr. Calvert.<sup>510</sup> Mrs. Curle argued in 1940 that the Iona crosses must have been erected before the crushing Viking attack of 806 but Raleigh Radford, in a review of Mrs. Curle's article, argued for monastic continuity at Iona in the ninth century, in view of the martyrdom of Blathmacc in 825 and the evidence of the kings' lists that the kings of the newly unified Scots and Picts were buried at Iona.<sup>511</sup> Professors Duncan and Barrow are inclined to accept the account in the kings' lists of the burials at Iona of most of the kings from Kenneth mac Alpin in the mid-ninth century to Donald III at the end of the eleventh, but burial grounds need not be thriving places and possible royal burials at Iona from the mid-ninth century cannot prove monastic continuity between 806 and the death of Kenneth mac Alpin in 858.<sup>512</sup> Dr. Calvert cites Walafrid Strabo's poem on Blathmacc as proof of a functioning monastery at Iona in 825,<sup>513</sup> but the poem tells us clearly that Blathmacc went to Iona in the hope of martyrdom, an object he achieved with considerable success in circumstances hardly conducive to the creation of great works of art. Blathmacc seems to have been in charge at Iona at the time, but he was not the abbot. The Annals of Ulster record the succession of Diarmait to the abbacy on the resignation of Cellach in 814, but Diarmait did not visit Iona

until 818.<sup>514</sup> A functioning monastery requires an abbot but the abbot was at Kells where the monastery, as such, was constituted by 814. Diarmait did, however, bring relics of Columba to Iona in 829 but he took them back to Ireland in 831 and Iona is not mentioned in the annals again until 849,<sup>515</sup> when there appears to have been a final division of the relics between Kells and Dunkeld. The historical evidence supports Mrs. Curle's pre-806 date for the Iona crosses.

The close correspondence between spiral, interlace and key patterns on Iona School crosses and in the Book of Kells suggests that the crosses and the manuscript were contemporaries. Dr. Henderson has argued that the "freedom of the spiral-work" on the Nigg slab and on the Kells Chi-Rho page "justifies a claim for a significantly close connection between the Book of Kells and the Nigg cross-face",<sup>516</sup> but much of the spiral ornament in the Book of Kells is arranged in ordered pairs<sup>517</sup> of the type seen in the medallions on Iona School crosses or in the bottom panel on the west face of St. John's cross. The Nigg slab belongs to a slightly later, more sophisticated phase than the earliest Iona School crosses and may reflect the influence of the manuscript. The similarities between the Kells Virgin and Child miniature and the Virgin and Child on St. Oran's cross suggest a common origin. The birds pecking at grapes on the Kildalton cross demonstrate that inhabited vinescrolls were known at Iona and we have seen that birds and vinescrolls appear in the Book of Kells. Ian Fisher has not yet presented his arguments in print for the manuscript having been made to celebrate a translation of Columba's relics c. 750, but Bishop Reeves noted that Bede's description of Columba's Iona, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, may imply that Columba's grave was undisturbed when Bede wrote c. 731 and Reeves suggested that Columba's relics might have been enshrined between then and the first promulgation of the Law

of Columba in 753.<sup>518</sup>

A date for the Iona School crosses in the second half of the eighth century accommodates the evidence of the crosses themselves. The ring on St. John's cross was a structural innovation belonging to a phase when the ringed cross was a relatively new form. Inscribed burial slabs with incised ringed crosses have been epigraphically dated to the eighth century and an inscribed slab with a ringed cross at Athlone is more precisely datable to c. 764. Textual and pictorial sources for the figural scenes on Iona School crosses were available before the Carolingian period. The key patterns on Iona School crosses are found in Insular manuscripts before the ninth century. The fine-line interlace on the Kilnave cross and the Nave Island fragment and the serpents and bosses ornament on the three crosses at Iona and on the Kildalton cross are paralleled in metalwork of Gaelic origin stylistically dated to the eighth century.<sup>519</sup> A date in the middle or the second half of the eighth century also coincides with the contemporary date Dr. Henderson has assigned to the St. Andrews Sarcophagus.<sup>520</sup> It is argued here that serpents and bosses ornament originated at Iona, but there need not have been much of a time lapse before the motif appeared in Pictland. The two earliest Iona School crosses, St. Oran's and St. John's, feature serpents and bosses ornament, as does Kildalton, although the Kildalton David and the Lion scene reflects Pictish influence. The St. Andrews Sarcophagus may therefore have been carved shortly after either St. Oran's or St. John's cross, but before the Kildalton cross.

It is suggested here that ringed crosses may have existed in the Gaelic world in the form of metalwork before St. John's cross was carved, which supports the possibility that ringed crosses developed in the south of Ireland independently of the Iona School.<sup>521</sup> Dr. Edwards

finds the bosses of the Iona School and Ossory crosses to be closely comparable, noting that "the traffic cannot all have been passing in one direction" and stressing the possibility of "the interplay of the ornamental repertoires of the two regions".<sup>522</sup> The support given Cáin Adomnáin in 697 by the king of the Osraige, the south Leinster people who gave their name to Ossory, underscores the likelihood of contact between the two regions. The Osraige were near neighbours of the Uí Ceinnselaigh, in whose domain were the principal monasteries of the paruchia of Abban móccu Corbmaic, which had at least one Dalriadic outpost at Keills in Knapdale.<sup>523</sup> The similarity in shape between the crosses carved in relief on the bases of the Ahenny South crosses and the original outline of the Kilnave cross also suggests contact between the two regions, without according primacy to either.

### Conclusions

Dr. Stevenson's identification of the experimental nature of the construction of the early Iona School crosses has been vindicated by the Iona Inventory. The decoration and iconography of the Iona School crosses were experimental as well. The imitation of metalwork decoration in stone by the sculptors of the Iona School was another function of the same innovative spirit that led to the application of carpentry techniques to the problem of construction. The iconography developed by the Iona School was to have a long life in later Irish sculpture.

The serpents and bosses motif developed in stone by the Iona School passed into Pictish and Irish sculpture but did not survive the first phase or generation of the Iona School itself. The motif first appeared on St. Oran's and St. John's cross and was still tightly controlled on the Kildalton cross, but it began to loosen and lose its

force on the upper shaft on the east face and at the bottom of the west face of St. Martin's cross. St. Martin's and Kildalton mark the transition between the two phases or generations of the Iona School. The height of relief of the figural scenes on St. Oran's, St. Martin's and Kildalton is similar but the lions on the west face of Kildalton achieve the highest relief of any human or animal figure carved by the Iona School. The shafts of the Keills and Kilnave crosses share a common spiral design but the Kilnave cross is only 65 mm thick and the depth of its relief is quite shallow.<sup>524</sup> The relief of the shaft decoration on the Keills cross is correspondingly low but its seated figure is carved in higher relief than any other human figure on an Iona School cross. The high relief of the Kildalton lions and the Keills figure may reflect Pictish developments. The introduction of serpents and bosses from Iona seems to have coincided with the realization of higher figural relief at St. Andrews and Kildalton received its version of David Killing the Lion in exchange from Pictland. The date of the Nigg slab, with its high relief and sophisticated serpents and bosses, probably falls somewhere between that of the Kildalton and Keills crosses. The second phase or generation of the Iona School is characterized by the absence of serpents and bosses ornament at Keills and Kilnave and experimentation with unusual cross shapes without rings. Serpents and bosses had already passed to Pictland by that point and appeared in Ireland in the ninth century on the Dromiskin cross head and beneath the arms of the Kells Market cross.<sup>525</sup>

The Iona Inventory suggests that the sculptors of the Iona crosses were imported and may have been Pictish.<sup>526</sup> Had that been the case, one might expect to see other features of the Iona School crosses appearing in Pictland in addition to serpents and bosses, but there



are no "birds' nest" bosses or voluted trumpet spirals in Pictish sculpture, nor are the Virgin and Child found in Pictish sculpture before the probably late ninth-century Brechin slab.<sup>527</sup> The dressing of incised Northumbrian name-stones followed the introduction of Continental stone architecture in Northumbria and relief sculpture developed shortly thereafter, but Professor Cramp would only attribute two sandstone lions at Monkwearmouth, which may have formed part of the monastic furniture, to foreign masons. The name-stones, the late seventh and early eighth-century architectural sculpture, the Monkwearmouth and Jarrow cross slabs, and the earliest Northumbrian crosses are all accepted as the work of Anglo-Saxon sculptors. The dressing of stone slabs and sculpting in relief passed from Northumbria to the Pictish heartland, but no one would identify Glamis No. 2 or Aberlemno No. 2 as the work of Anglo-Saxons. As soon as the Anglo-Saxons learned the rudiments of relief carving from Gaulish masons, they began producing relief sculpture in their own idiom, and so did the Picts, once they had learned the same techniques under Northumbrian tutelage. Stonecarvers in the West Highlands and Islands had already learned how to dress slabs for incised decoration by the beginning of the eighth century, before rectangular slabs had been dressed in the Pictish heartland. The techniques of relief carving used by the Iona School were most probably acquired by sculptors sent to Pictland to learn them or from Picts brought to Iona to teach them within a decade of the Pictish conquest of Dál Riata c. 740, but the surviving Iona School crosses were carved by Gaels who, like the Northumbrians and Picts before them, began producing relief sculpture in their own idiom as soon as they had mastered the techniques necessary to do so.

The distinctively Gaelic iconographical theme of deliverance which began its sculptural life at Iona takes us outside the Insular realm to

Mediterranean sources, some of which may have emanated from Rome.

Awareness at Iona of artistic developments in Rome could have travelled via Nantes, as Columbanus did in the seventh century, or through the paruchia of Columbanus. There is probably a kernel of truth in the later traditions of visits to Rome by various sixth-century Irish saints,<sup>528</sup> although the point may be stretched by the two eleventh-century manuscripts of the Irish Liber Hymnorum, which report that Columba wrote Altus Prosator in return for a cross sent to Columba by Gregory the Great, which is said to have been on Tory Island in 1532.<sup>529</sup> On firmer ground, we know that the abbot of Iona was a joint author of a letter sent to Rome c. 640, which received a reply from the Pope-Elect, and that Sedulius, an episcopus Brittaniae de genere Scottorum, attended a church council in Rome in 721. Iona had its own Gaelic sculptors and its own means of providing them with source material as well.

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

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16. Ibid., 47-8, 57, 91, 102-5, 474-5; Stokes 1905, 62; AU, 169; Bannerman 1974, 19n.
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285. Ibid., 17, 19, 201, 213-4.
286. Ibid., 201.
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  312. RCAHMS 1984, 220.
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318. Henry, Francoise, La sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, 2 vols., Paris 1933, pls. 53.7, 72.1, where the south side of the Kells Market cross is mislabelled "Côté ouest".
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334. Henry 1933, pls. 72.3, 75.3.

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370. RCAHMS 1982, 206, gives a probable total of fourteen serpents.
371. Ibid., 204.
372. RCAHMS 1984, 209.
373. Ibid., 210.
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381. The tongues are particularly visible in the drawings made by Charles C. Petley in 1811-2, first published in Archaeologica Scotica IV, 1872, 350, and reproduced in ECMS III, fig. 80.
382. The serpents on a fragment from Tarbat in Easter Ross Tarbat No. 2A, are somewhat unruly, but the surviving serpents on Tarbat Nos. 2, 2A and 2B seem to have been more loosely arranged than the serpents of Nigg or the Iona School. See ECMS III, fig. 87.
383. See note 351 above.
384. Henry 1938, 78, fig. 7C-E; Mahr and Raftery 1976, I, pls. 19.9, 31.10, 32.1a-b, II, 99-101, 139; Petersen 1940, 22, 61-2, 68-9, figs. 11, 67a-b, 76.
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399. The similarity between the two is noted in Graham, Robert C.,

The Carved Stones of Islay, Glasgow 1895, 47; Lamont, W. D., Ancient and Medieval Sculptured Stones of Islay, second edition, Glasgow 1972, 16, pl. VII; RCAHMS 1984, 346 (no. 374, n5).

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404. Henry 1947b, 148, pl. 65.
405. RCAHMS 1984, 28-9, 340 (n101).
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407. Ibid., 203-4, 278 (n43).
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411. Jacobsthal, Paul, Early Celtic Art, Oxford 1944, reprint Oxford 1969, 93-4, 154, nos. 377, 401a, e.
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413. Kilbride-Jones, H. E., Celtic Craftsmanship in Bronze, London 1980, 40-5, figs. 12-3.
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415. Nordenfalk 1977, pl. 3.
416. Henry 1947b, fig. 13; Henry 1965, 57, pl. 15; better photograph in Brandt-Förster, Bettina, Das Irische Hochkreuz, Stuttgart 1978, Abb. 28.
417. Northern Ireland, Government of, Ministry of Finance, Archaeological Survey of Northern Ireland, An Archaeological Survey of County Down, Belfast, HMSO 1966, pl. 74, no. 408.3.
418. Roe, Helen M., The High Crosses of Kells, Meath Archaeological and Historical Society 1959, reprint 1981, pl. XVIII.2.
419. RCAHMS 1982, 202-4.
420. Ibid., 204.
421. RCAHMS 1984, 210; Henry 1965, pl. 43. Mr. Ian Fisher pointed out



the relationship between the Kildalton and Steeple Bumpstead bosses in a paper delivered at the Conference of the Association of Art Historians in Edinburgh, 31.III.84.

- 422. Joseph Anderson in Graham, R., 1895, 85; ECMS III, 392; RCAHMS 1984, 211.
- 423. Ibid., Nordenfalk 1977, pl. 41.
- 424. Wilson, David M., in Kunst der Völkerwanderungszeit, ed. Helmut Roth, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte Supplementband IV, 1979, 212, 221, pl. 166a; Topic-Mersmann, Wiltrud, "Das Kreuz von Bischofshofen als Crux gemmata", Bischofshofen: 5000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur, ed. Roswitha Moosleitner, Bischofshofen 1984, 125-152, Taf. 9, 11 bottom, 12 right, Abb. 48-9. I am indebted to Ian Fisher for this reference.
- 425. Cramp 1984, pls. 98:526, 265:1429; Henderson 1983a, fig. 109c.
- 426. RCAHMS 1982, 196.
- 427. Ibid., 208.
- 428. Ibid., 206.
- 429. Henry 1974, pls. 5, 9, 20, 101, 120.
- 430. Nordenfalk 1977, pl. 7.
- 431. According to RCAHMS 1984, 209, the interlace around the lion on the lower arm of Kildalton consists of serpents' bodies.
- 432. Petersen 1940, 75-6, fig. 86; Mahr and Raftery 1976, I, pl. 32. 3a-b, II, 101, 125; Henry 1938, fig. 7B.
- 433. RCAHMS 1982, 208, suggests the face may originally have been human.
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- 435. Ibid., fig. 52b; discussed in Mac Lean 1985a.
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- 441. RCAHMS 1984, 210.

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(n91).

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- 529. Bernard and Atkinson 1898, I, x-xvi, 62-4, II, 23-5; Reeves 1874, lxxxv; Kelleher, Andrew, "Betha Coluimb Chille (Continuation)", Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie 10, 1915, 234-5.



## V. AFTER 806

Two related developments contributed to the decline of early medieval sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands. First, the Viking raids of the late eighth and early ninth century led to Norse settlement in the region by the mid-ninth century. Second, in response to the disruption caused by the Vikings, the Dalriadic and Pictish kingships were combined in the 840s and the newly unified kingdom of Scots and Picts was governed thereafter from the old Pictish heartland, a move which resulted in the transference of royal patronage from Iona to ecclesiastical centres east of Druimalban. Sculpture continued to be carved at Iona and Keills in Knapdale but other West Highland monasteries at Lismore, Kildonnan and Applecross probably fell victim to the initial Viking onslaught. The few major pieces of sculpture carved west of Druimalban between the ninth and eleventh centuries reflect late Pictish influence or Scandinavian taste for the most part, although St. Matthew's cross at Iona was probably carved by an itinerant sculptor from Ireland. Only a few West Highland sculptural fragments can be attributed to the twelfth century. The kindred of Somerled mac Gille-Brigde began to dominate political and ecclesiastical affairs in the West Highlands and Islands by the mid-twelfth century and continued to do so until the sixteenth century through its descendants the MacDougalls, the MacRuairis and, most notably, Clan Donald. By the time Somerled's near relations founded the Benedictine monastery and Augustinian nunnery at Iona at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the stylistic components of early medieval Insular sculpture had long ceased to have any contemporary relevance, although interlace patterns occasionally appear in the late medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands.

## Scandinavian Settlement

Place-names, grave finds and settlement sites provide the most reliable evidence of Norse settlements in the West Highlands and Islands. Professor Nicolaisen dates to the first half of the ninth century the place-name element stathr ("dwelling-place"), which is found at a number of sites in Lewis, Harris and north Skye, with single examples in North Uist, Coll, Tiree, and Islay. Place-names containing setr ("dwelling"), which Nicolaisen dates to the late ninth century, are similarly spread, with examples in Lewis, Harris, North Uist, Vatersay south of Barra, north Skye, and Islay. The intensification and expansion of Norse settlement is reflected by bólstathr ("farm") place-names found from the Butt of Lewis to South Uist in the Outer Isles; in the Inner Hebrides in Skye, Coll, Tiree, Mull, Islay, Jura, and the island of Luing on the coast of Mid-Argyll, with three examples on the mainland in Sunart and Morar. Nicolaisen suggests that bólstathr- names belong to a phase following stathr- and setr- names, although the paucity of setr- and bólstathr- names in Iceland may indicate that both were already well-established before the settlement of Iceland began c. 870.<sup>1</sup> Place-names with dalr ("valley") are found throughout the Hebrides and on the West Highland mainland from Cape Wrath to the south end of Kintyre, but Nicolaisen thinks that place-names noting natural features are of secondary importance and do not necessarily imply settlement, although Dr. Smyth argues that there must have been some Norse settlers "in the valleys that they named".<sup>2</sup>

Grave finds from isolated burials of Viking males need not imply settlement but David Wilson has observed that the graves of Viking women, identifiable by their oval brooches, "represent settlers not raiders".<sup>3</sup> Examples have been recorded in St. Kilda, Lewis, Barra, Tiree, Mull, Oronsay, and Islay. Oval brooches from Ballinaby, Cruach

Mhór and Newton in Islay and Càrn a' Bharraich in Oronsay were found in graves dated to the ninth century.<sup>4</sup> Viking male burials identified by their weapons have been recorded in Eriskay, Barra, Skye, Eigg, Tiree, Colonsay, Oronsay, and Islay. None of the Viking burials in the Western Isles has been dated later than the tenth century, which probably reflects the conversion of the incomers to Christianity.<sup>5</sup>

Few Norse settlements in the Hebrides have been excavated. Finds from a Norse house on the Drimore Machair in South Uist have been dated between the mid-ninth and early tenth century.<sup>6</sup> A radiocarbon reading of a whalebone sample from a Norse structure at the Udal in North Uist suggests a date between 825 and 850 for Norse settlement on the Sound of Harris.<sup>7</sup> Excavation of a settlement site at Machrins, Colonsay yielded grave finds and radiocarbon analyses of a human burial and animal bones from one of the four houses which may suggest an early Viking settlement of c. 800, although the houses seem to follow in a native tradition.<sup>8</sup>

The Norse settlements in the Hebrides were well-placed on the sea route between Norway and Ireland. Scales, balance-beams and balance weights found in Gigha and in a Viking grave in Colonsay indicate trade activities among the settlers.<sup>9</sup> In the late seventeenth century, Martin Martin saw a pair of scales found in a grave on the island of Ensay in the Sound of Harris, which may also have belonged to the Viking period.<sup>10</sup>

The Norse colonists in the Hebrides produced a leader in the mid-ninth century in the person of Ketill Flatnose, whose daughter Aud the Deep-Minded was married to Olaf the White of the Dublin Norse, until Olaf put her aside. Ketill seems to have risen to prominence in alliance with Olaf against Danish invaders who threatened Norse hegemony in Dublin and the Hebrides, although Ketill subsequently

refused to pay tribute to Olaf. Olaf shared the leadership of the Vikings in Ireland with the probably Danish Ivar after 857, when the Annals of Ulster record the defeat of Caittil Find and his Gall-Ghaidheil by Olaf and Ivar in Munster. Smyth would identify Caittil Find as Ketill Flatnose and the Gall-Gaidheil ("Norse Gaels") as Hebrideans, since a "mixed ethnic group" recognizable by the mid-ninth century "could only have come into being in the older Viking colonies of Scotland and in those areas of the Scottish colony where Norse influence was dominant but not exclusive", although other Gall-Ghaidheil were later known in Ireland.<sup>11</sup> Members of Ketill's kindred converted to Christianity in the Hebrides and took the new religion with them in their secondary emigration from the Hebrides to Iceland in the late ninth century. According to Icelandic tradition, Aud the Deep-Minded erected crosses in Iceland. Aud's sister Thórunn Hyrna married Helgi the Lean, a Hebridean Christian who settled at Kristnes ("Christ Headland") in Iceland, but turned to Thor in times of stress. Their son Ketill the Fool was remembered in Iceland as a Christian. Ketill's nephew Orlygur Hrappson was fostered by a Hebridean bishop named Patrick and built a church in Iceland dedicated to Kolumkilli.<sup>12</sup>

Christianity failed to outlive the first few generations of Ketill's descendants in Iceland, but the new religion gained strength among the Hebridean Norse and Iona may have taken on the new character of a Gall-Ghaidheal ecclesiastical centre in the later tenth century. The annals record the deaths of Fothad mac Brain in 963, a scribe and bishop of the "islands of Scotland" who may have been based at Iona, Fingin in 966, bishop of the "community of Iona", and Múgrón in 980, who is described as Columba's successor in Ireland and Scotland, abbot of Iona, bishop and scribe.<sup>13</sup> Olaf Cuarán of the Dublin Norse, the former king of York, died on pilgrimage at Iona in 980 and Iona's

revitalization may have led to the Danish attack of 986, when the abbot was killed with fifteen monks.<sup>14</sup> The Danes who plundered Iona were slaughtered in 987 and the Hebridean Gall-Ghaidheil were probably as Christian as their Dalriadic precursors by the time the Annals of Ulster call Gothfrith Haroldsson ri Innsi Gall, king of the "Foreigners' Isles" or Hebrides at his death in 989.<sup>15</sup> Only a few sculptures were ever carved in a Scandinavian style in the Hebrides but some carvings west of Druimalban are tentatively identified below as examples of a Gall-Ghaidheal "style".

### The Unification of the Scots and Picts

The Dalriadic and Pictish kingship had already been held simultaneously by Constantine son of Fergus and Oengus son of Fergus between c. 811 and c. 834, but it was Kenneth mac Alpin who permanently united the two kingdoms in the 840s and the new dynasty ruled thereafter from the old Pictish heartland. The move was prompted by Norse settlement in the Hebrides and made possible by the catastrophic Pictish defeat by Vikings in 839.<sup>16</sup> The transference of royal patronage to foundations east of Druimalban may have contributed to the sculptural decline in the West Highlands and Islands. Constantine son of Fergus "built Dunkeld" and Kenneth mac Alpin may have taken relics of Columba to Dunkeld c. 849.<sup>17</sup> The names of two abbots of Dunkeld in the later ninth century reflect the progress of the Gaelic takeover of religious affairs east of Druimalban after the unification of the two kingdoms. Tuathal son of Artgus, who is called both abbot of Dunkeld and "chief bishop" of Pictish Fortriu at his death in 865, had a Gaelic Christian name but his father's name may have been a version of Artcois, the name of the father of one of the prehistoric Pictish kings in the kings' lists.<sup>18</sup> Flaithbertach son

of Muirchertach, who died as princeps of Dunkeld in 873, had a Gaelic Christian name and patronymic.<sup>19</sup> Dunkeld enjoyed royal patronage but was not immune to Viking attacks. According to the Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton Manuscript, Danes wasted Dunkeld in the reign of Kenneth mac Alpin and Normanni plundered it in the reign of Constantine son of Aed at the beginning of the tenth century.<sup>20</sup> The Scottish Chronicle reflects the close cooperation of the new dynasty and the church east of Druimalban in its account of an agreement reached near Scone between Constantine son of Aed and his bishop Cellach, to administer the church in conformity with Scottish custom. Cellach's see is unidentified, although it is often assumed that he was bishop of St. Andrews. According to the kings' lists, Constantine son of Aed retired to the monastery of St. Andrews, where he became abbot of the Céli Dé before his death in 952.<sup>21</sup> A few sculptures carved west of Druimalban after the unification of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms were influenced by late Pictish sculpture and examples of the Picto-Scottish style of the tenth and eleventh centuries are also found in the west.

#### Late Pre-Viking Sculpture Outside Iona

Little of the sculpture being carved in the West Highlands and Islands when the Vikings arrived was of the high quality achieved by the Iona School. A few carvings in Eigg, Colonsay and north Knapdale may be roughly contemporary with the Iona School crosses. Three unpublished fragments from Applecross, however, suggest that Maelrubai's foundation may have been a major sculptural centre c. 800.

St. Donnán of Eigg perished with his entire community in a Pictish raid in 617 but the monastery at Kildonan was apparently revived in the late seventh or early eighth century. The Annals of Ulster record



the deaths of the princeps of Eigg in 725 and a relegiosus of Eigg in 752. Eigg disappears from the annals thereafter and the Vikings probably made monastic life at Kildonnan untenable by the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>22</sup> Two slabs from Kildonnan are likely to have been carved in the eighth century. The fragment of one, now displayed on the porch of the Lodge in Eigg, shows a circumscribed incised cross with bifid terminals and a central lozenge, with triquetras in false relief in the quadrants (pl. 60).<sup>23</sup> It may reflect metalwork influence. A heater-shaped hanging-bowl escutcheon found at Whitby, decorated with red champlevé enamel on a yellow ground, bears an equal-armed cross with slightly expanded terminals and triquetras in the quadrants.<sup>24</sup> An upright cross slab in the ruined sixteenth-century church at Kildonnan shows a circumscribed equal-armed cross in relief, with a central rectangle, straight cross arms and terminals squared on their inner ends, which widen slightly outwards (pl. 61).<sup>25</sup> Crosses with central rectangles and rectangular arm terminals appear on a number of Pictish slabs, on the Lindisfarne carpet page fol. 27V, the Lichfield Gospels carpet page, p. 220, and the cross page in St. Gall 1395.<sup>26</sup> Dr. Harbison dates an analogous Irish metalwork example of the type, the Antrim cross in the Hunt Museum, to the late eighth or early ninth century.<sup>27</sup> The cross on the Kildonnan slab is particularly reminiscent of the circumscribed equal-armed cross on the Pictish Meigle No. 2, which has a central square and rectangular terminals, although the Meigle terminals do not expand outwards.<sup>28</sup> The possibility of manuscript influence is strengthened by the four-symbols page in the Book of Durrow, which has a cross with a central square and arm terminals which taper outwards.<sup>29</sup>

Two stones from south of Ardnamurchan represent types probably

already known when the Vikings arrived. A slab from Riasg Buidhe in Colonsay (Fig. 27a) features a cross in relief with a fish-tail foot, wide side arms enclosing coiled spirals and a human face at the top. The spiral-decorated side arms extend slightly beyond the width of the slab. "Face crosses" originated in the eastern Mediterranean and were known in western Europe by the seventh century, the probable date of a "face cross" slab at Faha near Trier.<sup>30</sup> The type appeared in Ireland by the seventh or eighth century but the Colonsay example is unique in Scotland. Professor Thomas suggests a seventh-century date for the Riasg Buidhe slab but the relief carving of the face seems more appropriate to an eighth-century context.

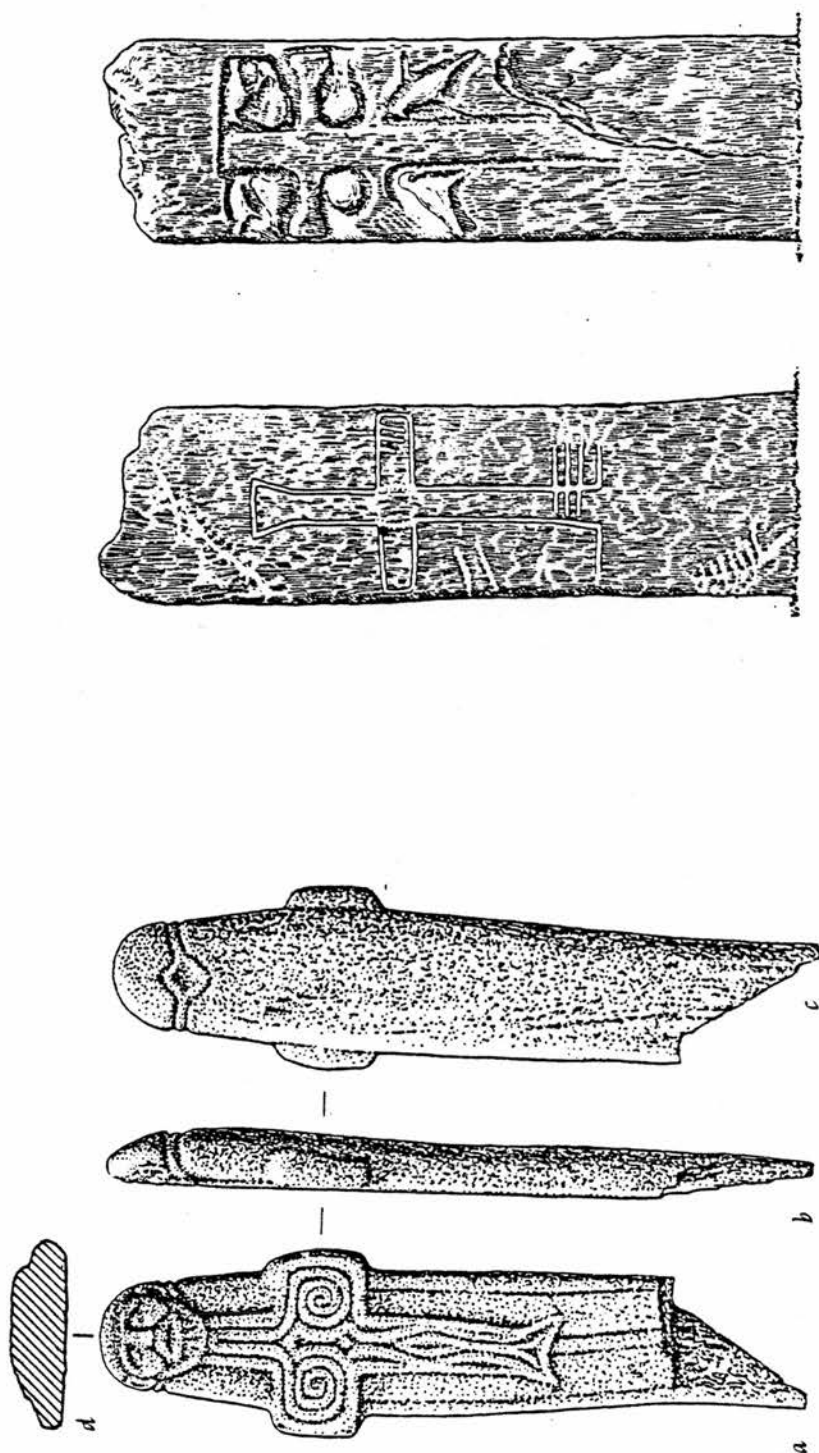
Dr. Richard Bailey dates a "face cross" at Brigham, Cumberland to the tenth century but the Royal Commission notes that the Riasg Buidhe slab belongs stylistically to an earlier period.<sup>31</sup>

An upright slab by a well at Kilmory Oib on the Oib peninsula, at the head of Loch Sween, probably belongs to the eighth or ninth century (pl. 62). The east side of the slab faces the well and bears an incised outline cross with an expanded extension of the top arm (Fig. 27b). The west side of the slab is carved in false relief and features a cross with slightly expanded side arms, a rounded boss at each of the lower ampits, two birds flanking the shaft and a bird on each side of the top arm. The intervening spaces between the bosses and the two lower birds have been identified as a second transom but are probably merely the result of the false relief carving of the birds and bosses.<sup>32</sup> The Mediterranean motif of birds adoring the cross may have arrived in the British Isles in an illuminated manuscript. Flanking birds face a cross on fol. 81V in a seventh-century north Italian Gospel Book, the so-called Codex Valerianus. Birds below the arms of the cross on the frontispiece of the eighth-

century Gelasian Sacramentary face the centre of the cross.<sup>33</sup> Two birds above the arms of the cross face inwards in the Crucifixion miniature in a late eighth-century manuscript at Würzburg, which is probably a Continental copy of an Irish exemplar.<sup>34</sup> The motif is unusual in Insular sculpture. Backward-looking long-necked birds, possibly swans, were carved above the arms of a cross with expanded terminals on a lost slab from Inishkeel in Donegal. Two swans face inwards above the arms of an interlace-decorated cross on a slab still at Inishkeel. Henry dated both slabs to the eighth century, but Harbison would date the extant slab to the ninth century.<sup>35</sup>

### Applecross

Applecross is last mentioned in the annals in 802, when the Annals of Ulster report the death of "Mac Oigi of Applecross, abbot of Bangor", one of several Irish abbots who died that year feliciter and in pace.<sup>36</sup> Mac Oigi would seem to have been at Bangor when he died but the anachronistic story repeated in the early sixteenth-century Breviary of Aberdeen that Maelrubai, the founder of Applecross who died in 722, was himself martyred by Vikings, suggests that Maelrubai was later associated in local tradition with a Viking attack of c. 800.<sup>37</sup> An upright slab at Applecross, which features an incised ringed cross in outline with small flat bosses in the quadrants, was locally regarded in the nineteenth century as the tombstone of Ruaidhridh Mac Coigean (pl. 63), whom Reeves and Skene identified, probably correctly, as Mac Oigi of Applecross. The local tradition of Mac Coigean's death at the hands of "Danes" may mark an attempt to connect his death with a distant memory of a contemporary Viking raid.<sup>38</sup> The stone may have been intended as a memorial for Mac Oigi, who died at Bangor. The slab appears to be unfinished and work may



a. RIASG BUIDHE, COLONSAY (RAHMS 1984, 257D)

b. KILMORY OIB, NORTH KNAPDALE (PSAS 33, 136)

FIG. 27 CROSS SLABS IN COLONSAY AND KNAPDALE

have been abandoned while the sculptor was in the process of creating a free-standing cross. The slab has been cut away to conform to the shape of the upper quadrants of the ring and the top arm of the cross. The incised outline shows a long wide base which curves inwards at the top to support the short shaft of the cross.

Three unpublished fragments are all that is left to suggest that Applecross was once a major sculptural centre which functioned in a Pictish artistic milieu.<sup>39</sup> Their mutilation probably owes less to the Vikings than to more recent religious excesses. According to local tradition, A' Chomraich, the "girth" or "sanctuary" of Maelrubai had a radius of six miles from the monastic church and was marked by stone crosses or cross-marked stones, at least one of which is known to have been smashed by a "bigoted mason" c. 1870.<sup>40</sup> The largest of the three fragments includes a number of unusual features in its decoration (pl. 64). It appears to have been a cross slab with a ringed cross and pierced quadrants but the surviving decoration on one side makes no provision for a ringed cross, and the curvature of the cable moulding at one end may have extended beyond the carved edge of the fragment. The fragment is divided into an upper and a lower zone by a narrow bead. The lower zone features a key pattern bordered by an intricate double row of looped interlace roundels with smaller knots between each four roundels. The interior panel in the lower zone is decorated with Romilly Allen's key pattern No. 974, which was used earlier mixed with interlace on the upper border of the left end panel of the St. Andrews Sarcophagus and in the ninth century on the Shandwick slab, Rosemarkie No. 1, Meigle No. 4, and the St. Andrews 14 cross shaft.<sup>41</sup> The fragmentary edges of two adjacent panels of different key patterns in the upper zone may have formed part of the shaft of a cross with pierced quadrants

at its armpits and nothing more to indicate a ring than the narrow bead visible beneath the surviving rope moulding. Pictish cross slabs with pierced quadrants are rare and the three examples in Perthshire have ringed or encircled crosses on both sides.<sup>42</sup> The panel beneath the rope moulding on the Applecross fragment is of particular interest and consists of two rows of spiral medallions with spirals terminating in lobes, the heads of ducks, birds of prey, and human heads. Similar triple spirals are carved on the Pictish St. Vigean's No. 7 cross slab in Angus. Isabel Henderson has described the St. Vigean's spirals with human head terminals as "a clear instance of a Pictish sculptor's behaving exactly like a Book of Kells artist but not in fact copying a design used in the book".<sup>43</sup> The Applecross spiral pattern has triquetras in the interspaces and the use of interlace in spiral patterns recalls the Nigg slab (pl. 57). The surviving sculpted edge of the Applecross fragment shows a small human figure in relief with bent knees above a double row of Stafford knots, positioned to provide repeated cruciform breaks, over a running spiral (pl. 65). The other two Applecross fragments may have belonged to different monuments. One of them, which has a narrow bead moulding enclosing an unusual interlace pattern, may have been the arm of a cross with small rounded armpits, chamfered arms and a circular central setting (pl. 66). The remaining Applecross piece is a corner fragment with yet another unusual interlace pattern bordering a field of spiral decoration composed of interlocking C-scrolls carved in low relief (pl. 67). The Applecross fragments require detailed analysis and publication. They suggest comparisons with Pictish sculpture and the Book of Kells. Nancy Edwards has also found points of comparison between them and the Ahenny crosses.<sup>44</sup> None of the Applecross fragments is likely to have been carved later



than the early ninth century, in view of the probable destruction of the monastery in the early Viking raids.

#### Pictish Influence After the Vikings Arrived

The interaction between Pictish sculpture and the Iona School and the Pictish character of the Applecross fragments reflect links between the West Highlands and Pictish sculptural centres east of Druimalban from the mid-eighth to the early ninth century, which were interrupted by the early Viking raids and settlements. Artistic contact with Pictland may have been renewed as a result of the unification of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms in the mid-ninth century and is reflected in a few sculptured crosses and cross slabs in the Western Isles.

Free-standing sculptured crosses were erected west of Druimalban before they appeared among the Picts, who favoured the cross slab. The fragment of a Pictish cross head from Edzell (pl. 31) is unlikely to be earlier than c. 800 and two cross shafts at St. Andrews, Nos. 14 and 19, probably belong to the second half of the ninth century.<sup>45</sup> Three Hebridean monuments, a cross shaft on Eilean Mór and the remains of two broken crosses in Canna, are hybrids which reflect late Pictish influence in their decoration but preserve the monumental form of the cross in accordance with Gaelic taste.

Romilly Allen identified the free-standing sculptured stone on the island of Eilean Mór in the Sound of Jura as the shaft of a ringed cross.<sup>46</sup> Part of the ring still projects from the upper part of the shaft (pl. 68). Two incised lines on each side of the front, or the side with the greatest amount of surviving decoration, create a wide double border and a flat, narrower outer moulding and these were continued around the ring. The design at the top of the central

decorative zone originally consisted of four interlocking quadrupeds with straight backs, splayed forelegs and their heads, tails and hind legs seen in profile and inclined towards the same side of their bodies. Each beast holds its hind legs closely to its body and bites the tail of the animal whose body crosses its own at right angles. The fantastic male animal below the four interlocked beasts has a long protruding tongue and its ear and tail form double spirals with the ears of two of the quadrupeds in the upper pattern. A hooded equestrian figure is carved beneath the fantastic animal, with a raised circular boss of interlace pattern No. 789 above the horse's hindquarters. The cruciform break in the interlace may identify the hooded figure as an ecclesiastic. Interlace pattern No. 789 is also found on the Kilmartin cross (Fig. 32) and the Dupplin cross in Perthshire, which Stevenson dates to the second half of the ninth century.<sup>47</sup> Romilly Allen related the mounted figure and the interlocking animals on the Eilean Mór shaft to the crozier-carrying horseman and the four interlaced human figures on one side of the Banagher cross shaft from Clormacnoise.<sup>48</sup> The Banagher and Eilean Mór riders are both placed low on the backs of their horses but the Banagher figure has no hood. A closer comparison is provided by the three hooded horsemen on the Class II Pictish cross slab at St. Madoes in Perthshire, whose bodies sink into their horses and whose horses have enlarged heads similar to that of the Eilean Mór horse.<sup>49</sup> The four interlaced human figures on the Banagher shaft are arranged in a saltire and their hair and beards form curvilinear patterns throughout the design. The rectilinear arrangement of interlocking animals at Eilean Mór corresponds more closely to the four seated human figures whose legs form two interlocking swastikas on the side of the Pictish Meigle No. 26.<sup>50</sup> The fantastic animal above the

Eilean Mór equestrian is generally suggestive of Pictish influence<sup>51</sup> and its protruding tongue may descend from the more graceful tongues of the Nigg and St. Andrews serpents (pls. 53a, 56), but its prominent eye and fangs may owe something to the biting serpents of the Iona School (pl. 37F). The key pattern below the equestrian may be the only example of Romilly Allen's No. 961, an expanded version of No. 960, which is found on the early ninth-century Rosemarkie No. 1.<sup>52</sup>

The two wrestling male figures at the bottom of the Eilean Mór cross shaft each hold one end of the band of interlace that separates them from the key pattern above. They have tails and exaggerated facial features. Embracing or wrestling figures are unusual in early medieval sculpture in Scotland and the only Pictish example is found on a late Class II slab at Glenferness in Nairnshire,<sup>53</sup> which probably dates to the mid-ninth century. The scene is thought to represent Jacob and the Angel and is more common in Ireland where it is found on the Killamery, Kilree, Castledermot South, and Kells Market crosses, and on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise.<sup>54</sup> The scene may have been developed in Insular art in a Gaelic context. The two figures atop the damaged upper arm on the west face of St. John's cross at Iona (pl. 38) have also been identified as Jacob wrestling the Angel.<sup>55</sup>

Most of the decoration on the back of the Eilean Mór cross shaft has been lost (pl. 69). The antlers, head, chest, and foreleg of a stag are visible on the upper part of the shaft. The surviving interlace decoration at the bottom is all double-ribboned. Romilly Allen identified the borders as examples of interlace pattern No. 544 and the design on the central portion of the shaft as "ten-cord broken plaitwork with double-beaded bands".<sup>56</sup> Double-ribbon

versions of No. 544 are not found in sculpture before the ninth century and appear on a narrow edge of the St. Andrews No. 15 cross slab and on the Jordanhill cross shaft in Renfrewshire.<sup>57</sup> There are similar interlace patterns on the Kells Tower and Market crosses, but they are made more complex by the interlacing of doubled strands.<sup>58</sup> The lowest central panel on the back of the Eilean Mór shaft is now below the turf but Romilly Allen described its decoration as a "swastika key pattern".<sup>59</sup> The Eilean Mór cross displays two of the features identified by Robert Stevenson as typical of Pictish sculpture in the second half of the ninth century: "two-ply interlace" and the prominent use of key patterns, features characteristic of the St. Andrews No. 14 cross shaft and the Dupplin cross.<sup>60</sup>

Two crosses in Canna are also suggestive of Pictish influence west of Druimalban after the unification of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms. Of these, Canna No. 2 was an unringed cross with rounded armpits and is broken into three surviving shaft fragments. Romilly Allen only knew of two fragments but a third unpublished fragment has been recovered by Mrs. Margaret Shaw Campbell of Canna.<sup>61</sup> The front or figural side of the shaft shows a standing human figure in relief with slightly bent knees, outward-pointing feet and crossed arms (pl. 70). The figure's head would originally have been positioned at the intersection of transom and shaft. He wears a short tunic and is presumably male. Double incised lines indicate a belt, the bottom hem of the tunic and the seams on the backs of the sleeves on his forearms. Two vertical incised lines divide the tunic below the belt into three sections and the line on the left is continued above the belt. Two triquetras are carved in false relief in the central part of the tunic beneath the belt. The vertical lines

on the tunic are reminiscent of classical clavi and recall the decoration of the tunics worn by figures on Pictish sculptures from Balbair in Inverness-shire, Golspie in Sutherland and the Brough of Birsay in Orkney. The drawing of the Canna figure's legs, feet, belt, tunic, and hem are particularly reminiscent of the bearded figure on the Golspie cross slab, which Stevenson dates to the early ninth century.<sup>62</sup> The double ribbon interlace below the face which terminates a Pictish pin from Golspie is suggestive of crossed arms comparable to those of the Canna figure.<sup>63</sup> The serpent trampled by the Canna figure inserts the tip of its snout just inside the hem of the figure's tunic and is perhaps suggestive of Christian symbolism, such as the serpent and the lion trampled in Psalm 91, although there is no lion on the Canna cross, or the apocryphal story of St. John surviving the serpent's poison. The right side of Canna No. 2 (pl. 71) is decorated with interlace pattern No. 568, which is found on ninth-century Pictish slabs including Farr, Cossins, Kirriemuir No. 3, Meigle No. 5, St. Andrews No. 7, and Sueno's Stone, which may be as late as the tenth century.<sup>64</sup>

The back of Canna No. 2 is divided into three panels (pl. 72). The top panel serves as the bottom arm of the cross head and is decorated with Romilly Allen's key pattern No. 971, which is found on the arms of crosses on Pictish slabs including the early Aberlemno No. 2, the probably early ninth-century St. Madoes No. 1 and St. Vigean's No. 7, the ninth-century Fowlis Wester cross slab with protruding side arms, the ninth-century Meigle No. 5, and a late slab at Reay in Caithness.<sup>65</sup> No. 971 is also found on the surviving arm of the Edzell cross (pl. 31). A related key pattern is carved on the upper part of the large Applecross fragment (pl. 64). The central panel on the back of Canna No. 2 features Romilly Allen's interlace

pattern No. 758, a repeated version of No. 500. All of the other examples of No. 758 listed by Romilly Allen are in County Durham. Of these, Cramp dates Aycliffe 1 and Durham 1 to the late tenth or early eleventh century and Durham 11 between the late tenth and late eleventh century.<sup>66</sup> A date between the mid-ninth and early tenth century seems more probable for Canna No. 2. The fish tails of the four serpents in the bottom panel on the back of Canna No. 2 may descend on one side of the family from the fish-tailed serpents on the constrictions of the arms of the cross on Glamis No. 2 (pl. 30) but their eared heads are seen from above and recall the eared serpents on the left end panel of the St. Andrews Sarcophagus (pl. 53) and at the centre of the large decorative zone on the front of the shaft of St. Oran's cross (pl. 32). The elongated snouts and ears of the Canna serpents are perhaps most likely to derive from manuscripts and fish-tailed serpents with closely comparable heads are found in the Book of Kells in the interlace patterns at the top and bottom of the legs of the initial N on fol. 130R.<sup>67</sup> A more contemporary sculptural comparison is provided by the fish-tailed serpents on the Shandwick slab in Easter Ross.<sup>68</sup> The left edge of Canna No. 2 (pl. 73) features interlace pattern No. 598, a double row of Stafford knots forming cruciform breaks between them, over a series of paired trumpet spirals, a spiral pattern which Romilly Allen thought was unique, but he did not know of the Applecross fragments.<sup>69</sup> The surviving edge of the large Applecross fragment (pl. 65) shows the same juxtaposition of interlace No. 598 and a series of double spirals. The decoration of the edge of Canna No. 2 probably derives from Applecross.

Only the shaft, the centre of the cross head, one side arm, and part of the ring survive of Canna No. 1, the cross at A' Chill



(Keills) in Canna. Some of the figures on the front, or figural side, and some of the decoration on the back of Canna No. 1 suggest Pictish influence. The cross is very badly worn and the following discussion depends to a great extent on Romilly Allen's description.<sup>70</sup> The remaining quadrant of the ring curves inwards, enclosing a semi-circular ampit, and has a human figure carved upon its front side (pl. 74).<sup>71</sup> The front of the central disc of the cross head seems to have shown a figure holding a serpent on each side, with the serpents' tails forming Stafford knots and the figure's legs extended to border the disc. The design is generally comparable to the figure with interlaced double fish tails on Meigle No. 22, which probably belongs to the late ninth or early tenth century.<sup>72</sup> The front of the surviving arm of Canna No. 1 is almost entirely defaced but originally bore an animal which Stuart identified as a camel. The forelegs and long curving neck of the camel shown in Stuart's plate<sup>73</sup> are still visible. Dr. Stevenson has identified a camel in a Pictish context on Meigle No. 1.<sup>74</sup> The remaining figures on the front of Canna No. 1 were all carved in high relief. The animal at the top of the shaft is an elephantine creature with a long snout and narrow hips. Below it is a quadruped which turns around to bite its own abdomen. Two animals above the ring of the cross on St. Madoes No. 1 turn around to bite their own backs and Dr. Henderson suggests a connexion between the high relief of the St. Madoes animals and those on Meigle No. 22, which corresponds to that of the figures on Canna No. 1.<sup>75</sup> The elongated backs and height of relief of the Canna No. 1 and Meigle No. 22 animals are particularly comparable. A horseman is carved below the backward-turning Canna animal. An indistinct shape, perhaps a seated human figure, is carved above the horse's rump. Two large human figures are carved beneath the horseman. The figure on

the left appears to be the Virgin, seated and holding her Child. The Virgin is seen frontally from the waist up but her legs are inclined to the right in a position reminiscent of the Virgin on Cuthbert's coffin.<sup>76</sup> The bearded figure to the right of the Canna Virgin has long hair and is shown kneeling in profile. He holds an object in his right hand which either has a spout or two handles and he touches the Child or the Virgin's arm with his left hand. The scene may reflect Irish influence. Romilly Allen compared the group to the Adoration of the Magi on the east face of the Muiredach Cross at Monasterboice, where the leading Magus places his hand on the Child.<sup>77</sup> The height of the relief carving on the Muiredach Cross is also comparable to Canna No. 1. The size of the Canna figures gives prominence to the scene, which may have been considered more important than the inclusion of the other two Magi. The defaced area below the two large figures seems to have been occupied by two animals. The extended border to the right of the shaft has a large protrusion in the middle with interlace pattern No. 635 below it, a pattern also found on the mid-ninth century Norham 5 cross shaft in Northumberland.<sup>78</sup> Some worn heavy interlace is carved on the end of the Canna No. 1 cross arm and two human figures are vertically arranged below it on the edge of the shaft, their upper and lower bodies in separate panels.<sup>79</sup>

The central disc of the cross head on the back of Canna No. 1 (pl. 75) is now mostly illegible, but seems to have consisted of four circles with a central lozenge and triangular interlace knots in the spandrels on the perimeter of the disc, a design reminiscent in general terms of the four circles framed by serpents' bodies at the bottom of the front of the Shandwick slab, which are filled and surrounded with interlace.<sup>80</sup> The back of the side arm of Canna No. 1

is now entirely defaced, but Stuart's plate shows an all-over interlace pattern.<sup>81</sup> The now defaced constriction of the bottom arm of the cross is decorated in Stuart's plate with a continuation of the key pattern carved on the top shaft panel. Romilly Allen identified the key pattern as No. 958, which is found east of Druimalban on the Anglo-Saxon Abercorn cross shaft, the Pictish Aberlemno No. 3, the ninth-century Ulbster slab in Caithness, and in a variant form on the top of the back of the Nigg slab.<sup>82</sup> The second panel from the top on the back of Canna No. 1 shows two attenuated quadrupeds with their bodies twisted together and their tongues and ears forming elaborate interlace patterns.<sup>83</sup> The interlaced tongues recall the animals on the top arm of the cross on the Nigg slab (pl. 55) and seem to follow in a Pictish sculptural tradition.

A broken slab from Kildonnan, now on the porch of the Lodge on Eigg, is an unmistakably Pictish monument<sup>84</sup> fashioned out of an older relief carving. The scene on the back reads from top to bottom and shows a bearded horseman, two dogs, a bird, a lion, a horse, and two large animals which are now headless (pl. 77). The crude draughtsman-ship suggests either lateness or a provincial sculptor. The incised cross with expanded terminals, bifid foot and extended pedestal recalls the Bàgh na h-Uamha pillar stone in Rum (pl. 9) and was presumably added when the relief cross was carved on the opposite face (pl. 76). The key pattern on the bottom of the front of the Eigg slab is a somewhat clumsy version of key pattern No. 974. The bottom panels beneath the crosses on two northern slabs at Farr in Sutherland and Reay in Caithness are also filled with key pattern No. 974,<sup>85</sup> which was first used mixed with interlace on the St. Andrews Sarcophagus, as we have seen, and is also found on the large Applecross fragment

(pl. 64) and the Rosemarkie No. 1 and Shandwick slabs in Easter Ross. The ringed cross on the Eigg slab is filled with an eccentric double-ribbon interlace pattern which expands to fill the ring with a double twist. Similar but unringed crosses with central squares and rectangular terminals filled with double-beaded interlace are carved on Kirriemuir No. 1 and St. Andrews No. 15. The related cross on Invergowrie No. 1 has a ring decorated with a key pattern.<sup>86</sup> The Eigg slab is particularly comparable to Reay, which features a short ringed cross above a rectangular panel of key pattern, and both slabs probably belong to the late ninth or early tenth century. The letters IHU and XPI are incised on the upper border of the Eigg slab, on either side of the top arm of the cross.

A slab at Ardchattan Priory on the north shore of Loch Etive reflects both Pictish and Scandinavian influence (pl. 78). Its present shape suggests that it was cut down in the later medieval period to provide a burial slab, or later still to make a coffin lid.<sup>87</sup> Mrs. Curle was inclined to a late seventh-century date for Ardchattan, but she noted that "the human figure merging into interlace" on the top arm of the cross "is found in Irish manuscripts of the eighth century" and she was troubled by the fact that "the whole slab bears a general resemblance to the post-Viking monuments of the Isle of Man".<sup>88</sup> Stevenson has identified the bifurcation of its interlace as a Norse feature, relates its pelleted and triple-ribbon interlace to Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture and dates it to the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>89</sup> Bifurcated interlace is found on Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in Yorkshire at Collingham, Otley and Saxton and triple-ribbon interlace at Collingham and Tadcaster.<sup>90</sup> Pelleted, bifurcated and triple-ribbon interlace are found on Manx cross slabs at Michael and Jurby.<sup>91</sup> The Nordic features of

Ardchattan help date it but other aspects of its decoration are late echoes of the Pictish tradition. The circular spiral composition on the centre of the cross head consists of four trumpet spirals and four peltae fitted together. One of the volutes on each of the trumpets merges together with a triple spiral. The tendrils which bifurcate from the surrounding interlace to form small double spirals with the remaining volutes are Scandinavian in origin, but reluctance to leave volutes unattached is a Pictish trait. A step pattern is incised on the ring of the cross on the Ardchattan slab. The shaft is decorated with bifurcated interlace, interlocking C-scrolls and a key pattern. Stevenson has identified the prominent use of interlace, 'key and step patterns, C-scrolls set horizontally and vertically with a lack of imagination' as typical of late Pictish work.<sup>92</sup> Romilly Allen identified the key pattern at the bottom of the cross shaft as No. 958 which, as we have seen, is found east of Druimalban on Aberlemno No. 3, Ulbster and Nigg and in the west on the back of Canna No. 1 (pl. 75).<sup>93</sup>

Animals are carved above and below the quadrants of the ring on the right side of Ardchattan and the four human figures below the animals underneath the ring are suggestive of David iconography. The three upper figures are musicians seen in profile who wear hoods and sit on the ground with their legs straight out in front of them. The topmost figure plays a harp. Seated harpers are carved on St. Oran's cross (pl. 36) and St. Martin's cross (pl. 42) at Iona, and are found east of Druimalban on a fragmentary monument at St. Andrews and on the Monifieth No. 4 and Dupplin crosses.<sup>94</sup> The central Ardchattan musician plays a triple pipe, an instrument also shown on St. Martin's cross (pl. 42) and a tenth-century fragment at Tower of Lethendy in Perthshire.<sup>95</sup> The third Ardchattan musician plays an unidentified

instrument. David and his Musicians had already appeared west of Druimalban on St. Martin's cross but hooded figures are common in Pictish art, although there are no surviving hooded Pictish musicians. The likelihood of Ardchattan's David iconography deriving from a Pictish source is strengthened by the warrior figure at the bottom right of the slab, who carries a notched shield and a spear. David the Warrior is similarly armed on the front of the St. Andrews Sarcophagus and a spearman on the back of Aberlemno No. 3 may also carry a notched shield.<sup>96</sup>

Free-standing crosses were erected more often than they had been previously in the old Pictish heartland in the second half of the ninth century, perhaps in response to the expectations of Gaels moving east, while Pictish taste affected the decoration of crosses carved west of Druimalban in the same period. The abbreviated Adoration of the Magi on Canna No. 1 may derive from an Irish source and the scene of Jacob and the Angel on the Eilean Mór cross may depend upon St. John's cross at Iona, although the tails and faces of the Eilean Mór figures probably owe more to the Pictish fascination with monsters and anthropomorphic figures than to Gaelic influence. The David iconography of the Ardchattan slab derives from Pictland. The key patterns and the interlace on the Canna, Eilean Mór, Eigg, and Ardchattan monuments help establish a network of relationships between sculpture carved west of Druimalban from the mid-ninth to the tenth century, and post-800 Pictish sculpture in Caithness and Sutherland and at the major sculptural centres in Easter Ross, Angus, Perthshire, and Fife. The similarities between the decorated edges of the large Applecross fragment and Canna No. 2 and between the key patterns on the Eigg slab and the large Applecross fragment demonstrate that sculpture at Applecross continued to exert influence



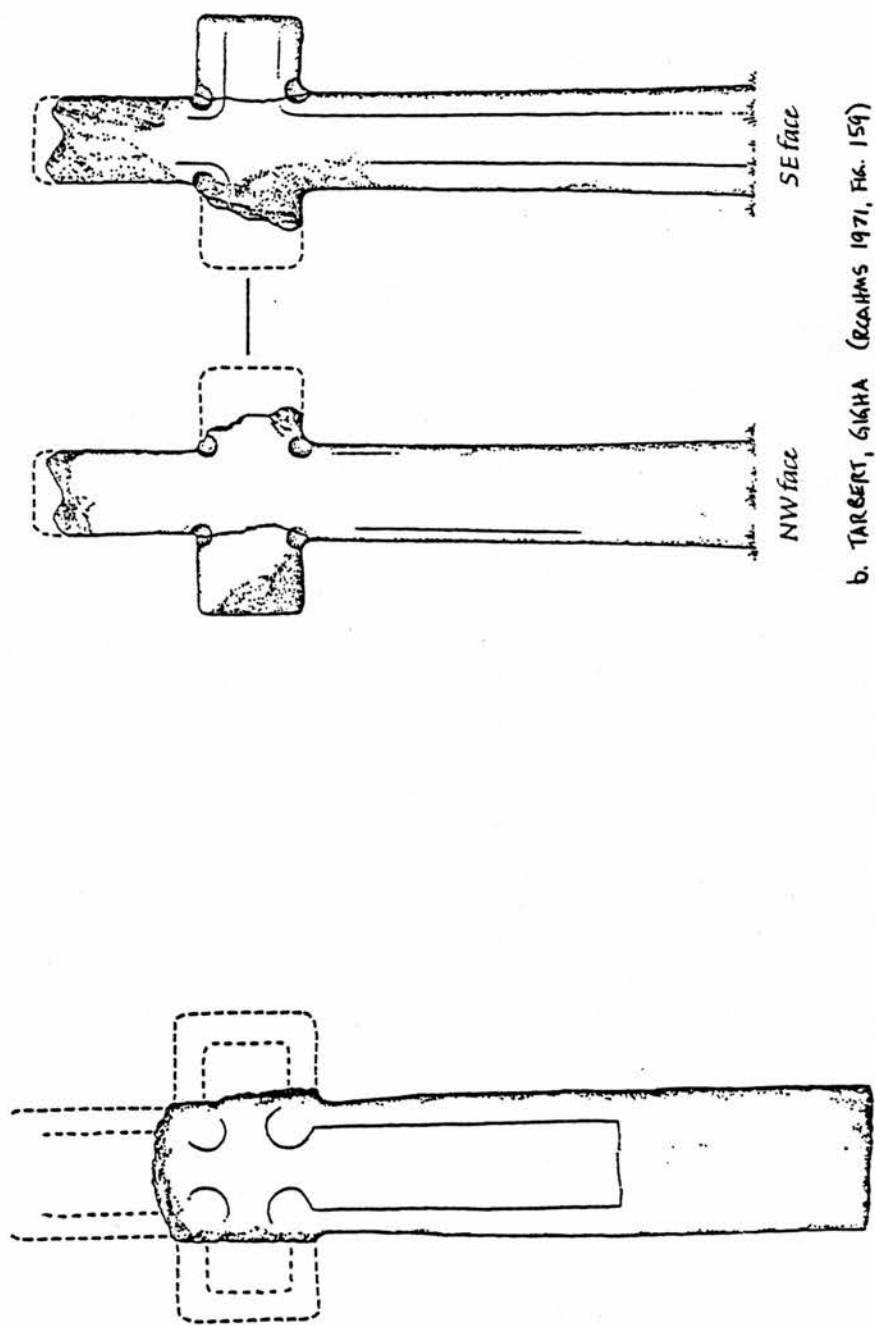
west of Druimalban after the probable demise of the Applecross monastery. Indeed, Applecross may have served as an artistic conduit between east and west in the eighth century. The modern road from Lochcarron to Applecross is notoriously difficult, but contact could have been maintained with Easter Ross both before and after the early Viking raids by sea to the head of Upper Loch Torridon and then overland via Glen Torridon, Glen Docherty and Strath Bran. The two Canna crosses suggest monastic activity in Canna after the Viking settlements began but the Eigg slab is perhaps more likely to have been a memorial of a secular Pict, or a local secular figure whose monument was carved by a Pictish sculptor. The presence of a cross on Eilean Mór suggests that eremitic or monastic life may have continued after the Vikings arrived or been resumed after the mid-ninth century. The iconography and decoration of the Eilean Mór and Ardchattan monuments reflect Pictish influence, which probably travelled west from the old Pictish heartland after the unification of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms, an exchange facilitated by a corresponding movement of Dalriadic Gaels east of Druimalban.

Two cross-decorated stones at Iona may also have been affected by Pictish sculpture. The Iona Inventory suggests that a broken upright cross slab at Iona with an unringed relief cross on one side and a cross in relief on the other may reflect Pictish influence (Fig. 34, No. 61).<sup>97</sup> A small rounded boulder at Iona known as "St. Columba's Pillow" features a ringed cross with parallel-sided arms, a square central expansion and rectangular arm terminals (Fig. 38, No. 60), a late form seen on the Pictish Farnell, Aldbar and Invergowrie Nos. 1 and 2 slabs.<sup>98</sup>

## The Decline of the Gaelic Tradition

Free-standing crosses continued to be erected in the West Highlands and Islands after the collapse of the Iona School and ringed crosses were still carved on slabs, but the major developments in Gaelic sculpture after 806 were made in Ireland. St. Matthew's cross at Iona is the only relief monument of any great significance carved within the direct line of the Gaelic tradition west of Druimalban after 806.

In addition to the Eilean Mór and Canna crosses, free-standing crosses carved in the West Highlands and Islands between the ninth and twelfth or thirteenth centuries are also found in Kintyre, Gigha, Mid-Argyll, Iona, Ardnamurchan, and the Outer Hebrides. Crosses at Killeen, Kintyre and Tarbert, Gigha had rectangular armpits and minimal decoration. The Killeen cross has the figure of a ringless cross with rounded armpits incised on one side and has lost its top arm and side arms (Fig. 28a).<sup>99</sup> Most of one side arm of the Tarbert cross is lost while the other survives but is broken off (Fig. 28b). Small rounded depressions are cut into the rectangular armpits on both sides of the cross and the figure of a cross with rounded rectilinear armpits is incised on one side.<sup>100</sup> The Iona Inventory suggests a date in the late ninth or tenth century for the fragment of a ringed cross at Iona with projecting semicircular rolls inside the ring (Fig. 29, No. 86), a feature also found on ringed cross slabs at Iona (Fig. 38, Nos. 57-8). Crosses at Roscrea in County Tipperary and Kilfenora in County Clare are Irish examples of the type dating to the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>101</sup> Other fragments at Iona (Fig. 29, Nos. 87, 92-3) were probably carved between the late ninth and twelfth century.<sup>102</sup> The remains of three disc-headed crosses "are of a type more common in Wales and Cornwall than in



a. KILLEEN, KINTYRE (KCAHMS 1971, FIG. 140)

b. TARBERT, GIGHA (KCAHMS 1971, FIG. 159)

FIG. 28 FREE-STANDING CROSSES IN KINTYRE AND GIGHA

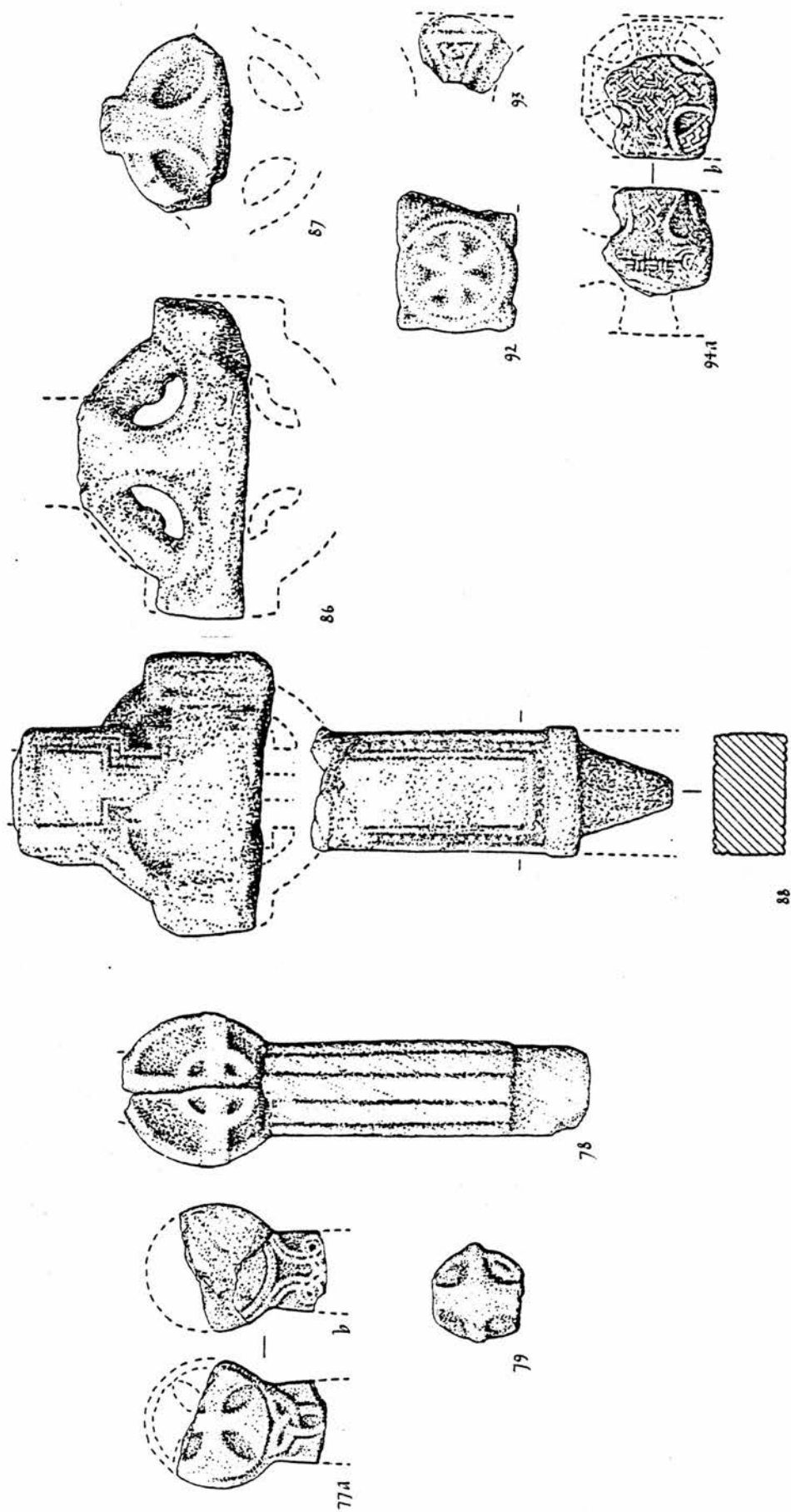
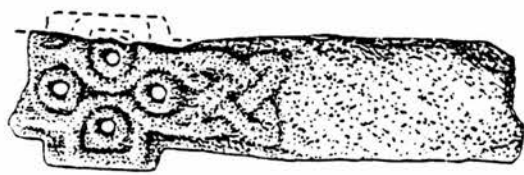


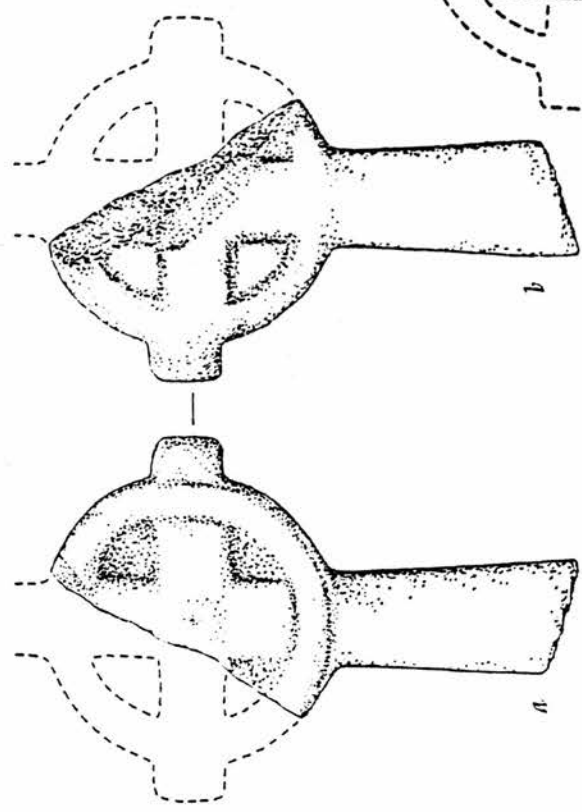
FIG. 29 DISC-HEADED CROSSES AND OTHER LATE CROSSES AT IONA (RCAHMS 1982, pp 192, 210)

Ireland and Scotland" and were probably carved between the late ninth and twelfth century (Fig. 29, Nos. 77-9). An early disc-headed cross at Millport, Great Cumbrae (Fig. 15i) may be British work. A probably later example is known in a Gaelic context at Killaghtee in Donegal.<sup>103</sup> Two fragments survive at Iona of a cross with a squared central expansion, rectangular arm terminals, a pelleted border, and sunken but unpierced quadrants within the ring (Fig. 29, No. 88). Its proportions are closer to Irish than to Pictish examples of the type and the Iona Inventory compares it to the probably twelfth century Mona Incha and Roscrea crosses in Tipperary.<sup>104</sup> Broken ringed crosses at Cill Mhàiri in Ardnamurchan and Balinakill in Kintyre (Fig. 30a-b) are undecorated and carved with unpierced rings and sunken quadrants. The Royal Commission suggests that the Cill Mhàiri cross may be as late as the eleventh century.<sup>105</sup> A single fragment of a pierced ringed cross head found on a coastal reef near Southend in Kintyre has the worn figure of the Crucified Saviour carved upon it in relief (Fig. 30d). The Royal Commission describes it as "a late descendant of the Irish high cross" and dates it to the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>106</sup>

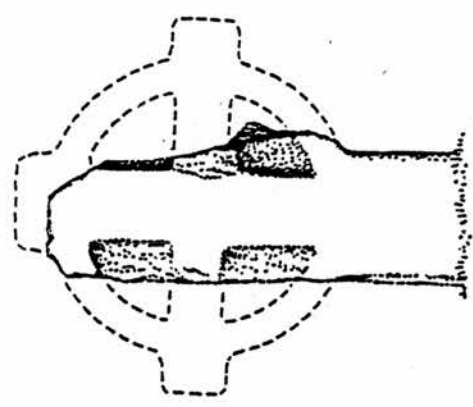
Other late crosses and slabs west of Druimalban also illustrate the decline of the Gaelic tradition. An upright slab on the island of Inishail in Loch Awe has low relief ringed crosses with sunken circular arm-pits carved on opposite sides (Fig. 31).<sup>107</sup> The side arms of the crosses are extended slightly beyond the width of the slab. The tapering top arms of the crosses and the narrow constrictions of their arms recall the proportions of the Kells Tower Cross.<sup>108</sup> A broken unringed cross at Teampull Mhuir on the tidal island of Vallay on the North coast of north Uist (pl. 79) has a single surviving side arm similar in shape to the side arms of the



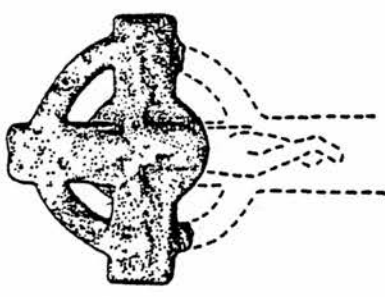
c. BALNAHARD, COLONSAY (RECHMS 1984, No. 326)



a. CILL MHAIRI, ARDNAMURCHAN (RECHMS 1980, FIG. 164)



b. BALINAKILL, KINTYRE (RECHMS 1971, FIG. 116)



d. SOUTHERND, KINTYRE (RECHMS 1971, FIG. 152)

FIG. 30 LATE CROSSES WEST OF DRUMALBAN



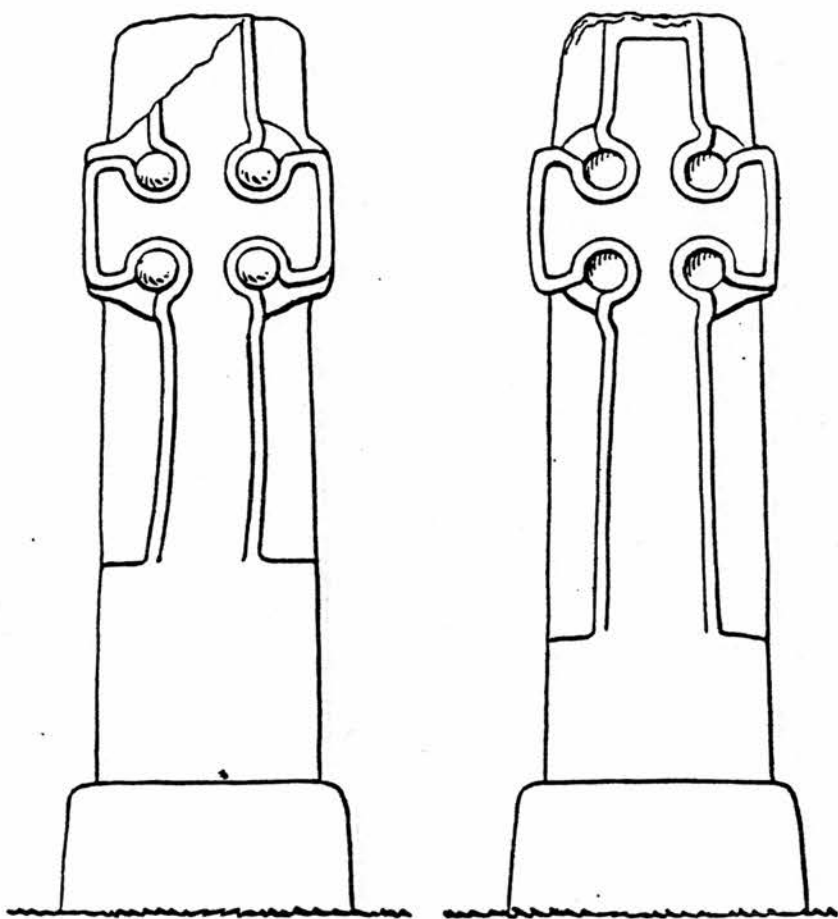
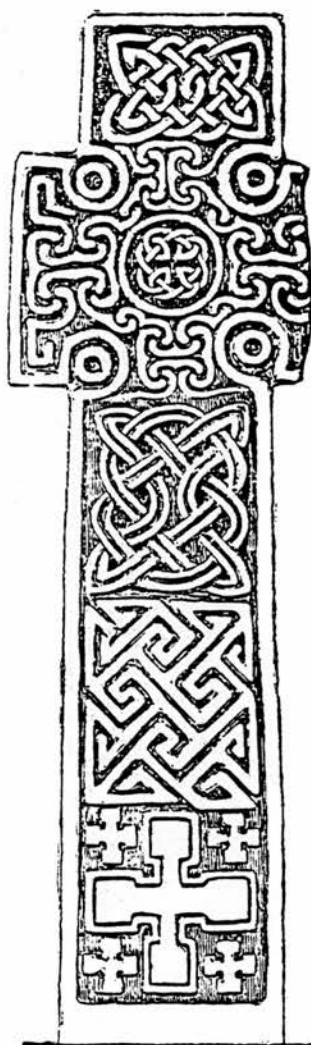


FIG. 31 CROSS SLAB, INISHAIL, LOCH AWE (ECMS III, FIG. 432)



A.—Front.



B.—Back.

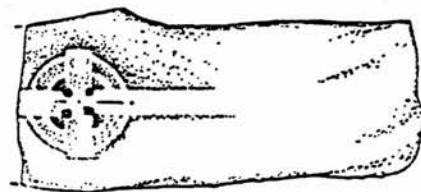
FIG. 32 THE KILMARTIN CROSS (ECMS III, FIG. 411)

crosses on the Inishail slab.<sup>109</sup> Martin Martin recorded two crosses in Vallay and Muir's nineteenth-century sketch of the two crosses shows that the other one, now lost, had pierced or sunken holes at its rectangular armpits.<sup>110</sup> A cross at Hougharry in North Uist with a plain central boss and an expanded top arm has lost one of its side arms and most of the other (pl. 80).<sup>111</sup> The similar Cille Pheadair cross in North Uist has two plain central bosses placed side by side.<sup>112</sup> The bosses on the Hougharry and Cille Pheadair crosses may pay simple tribute to the bosses of the Iona School. A well-drawn ringed cross carved in false relief on a slab at Kilmory Knap (pl. 81) has thistle-shaped quadrants and flat bosses in its circular armpits. A cross of similar proportions with circles at the armpits is carved on a slab at Edderton in Easter Ross.<sup>113</sup> A probably later slab at Kilmory Knap features a cross with rectangular armpits, flat bosses in the quadrants and a key pattern on the shaft which is not shown in White's drawing and is probably a modern addition (pl. 82).<sup>114</sup> A third slab at Kilmory Knap (pl. 83) bears at one end a cross head in false relief with a circular central expansion and flat bosses within shallow quadrants. White's drawing suggests that the cross shaft may originally have been shown in incised outline.<sup>115</sup> Romilly Allen recorded a slab at Keills in Knapdale which has since been lost but the extant photograph shows a badly carved ringed cross with rectangular armpits and pellets in the quadrants (pl. 84). The area to the right of the cross shaft was damaged but there was a bird in profile over a long-necked beast to the left of the shaft.<sup>116</sup> The bird and the animal may have derived from the Eagle symbol on the top arm and the long-necked "cats" on the shaft of the Keills cross (pl. 44).<sup>117</sup> The lost Keills slab is probably no earlier than the late ninth century and may be as late

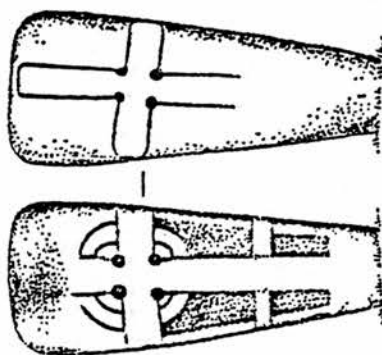
as the eleventh. An incised ringed cross on a slab used to support one end of a table tomb at Kilmartin (pl. 85) could have been carved in the eighth century but it may be a century or two later.

The decline of the Gaelic tradition in the West Highlands is perhaps best represented by the Kilmartin cross in Mid-Argyll. It has lost the end of one of its short side arms and has small circular bosses with central depressions carved within its rectangular armpits on the front (Fig. 32). A slightly raised central boss on the front of the cross head is decorated with interlace No. 789 which, as we have seen, is also found on the Eilean Mór cross shaft (pl. 68) and the Dupplin cross in Perthshire.<sup>118</sup> A single-strand interlace pattern is carved on the top arm on the front of Kilmartin and a double-ribbon interlace pattern on the upper part of the shaft. Romilly Allen identified the spiral pattern on the side arms and in the constriction of the lower arm as No. 1054, a late pattern found on the Dupplin cross, on cross slabs at Farr, St. Vigeans, Meigle, and St. Andrews; and in Ireland on the Boho and Termonfechin crosses.<sup>119</sup> The key pattern on the front of the shaft of the Kilmartin cross is an example of No. 958 which, as we have seen, is also found in the west on Canna No. 1 (pl. 75) and the Ardchattan slab.<sup>120</sup> An equal-armed cross with rectangular terminals at the extremities and no central expansion is carved in relief at the bottom of the shaft on the front of the Kilmartin cross, with a smaller cross of similar proportions in each of the quadrants. An analogous ringed cross with rectangular terminals on the top and side arms and no central expansion is carved on a slab built into an interior wall in St. Kilda's Episcopal Church on Lochbuie in Mull (Fig. 33a).<sup>121</sup>

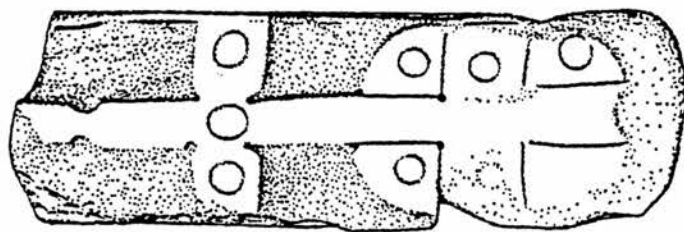
The back of the Kilmartin cross (Fig. 32b) features a narrower cross carved in relief whose short side arms, small circular armpits



a. LOCHBUIE, MULL  
(RCAHMS 1980, FIG. 193)



b. KILKERRAN, KINTYRE  
(RCAHMS 1971, FIG. 132)



c. CLACHAN, KINTYRE  
(RCAHMS 1971, FIG. 123)

FIG. 33 POST-800 CROSS SLABS

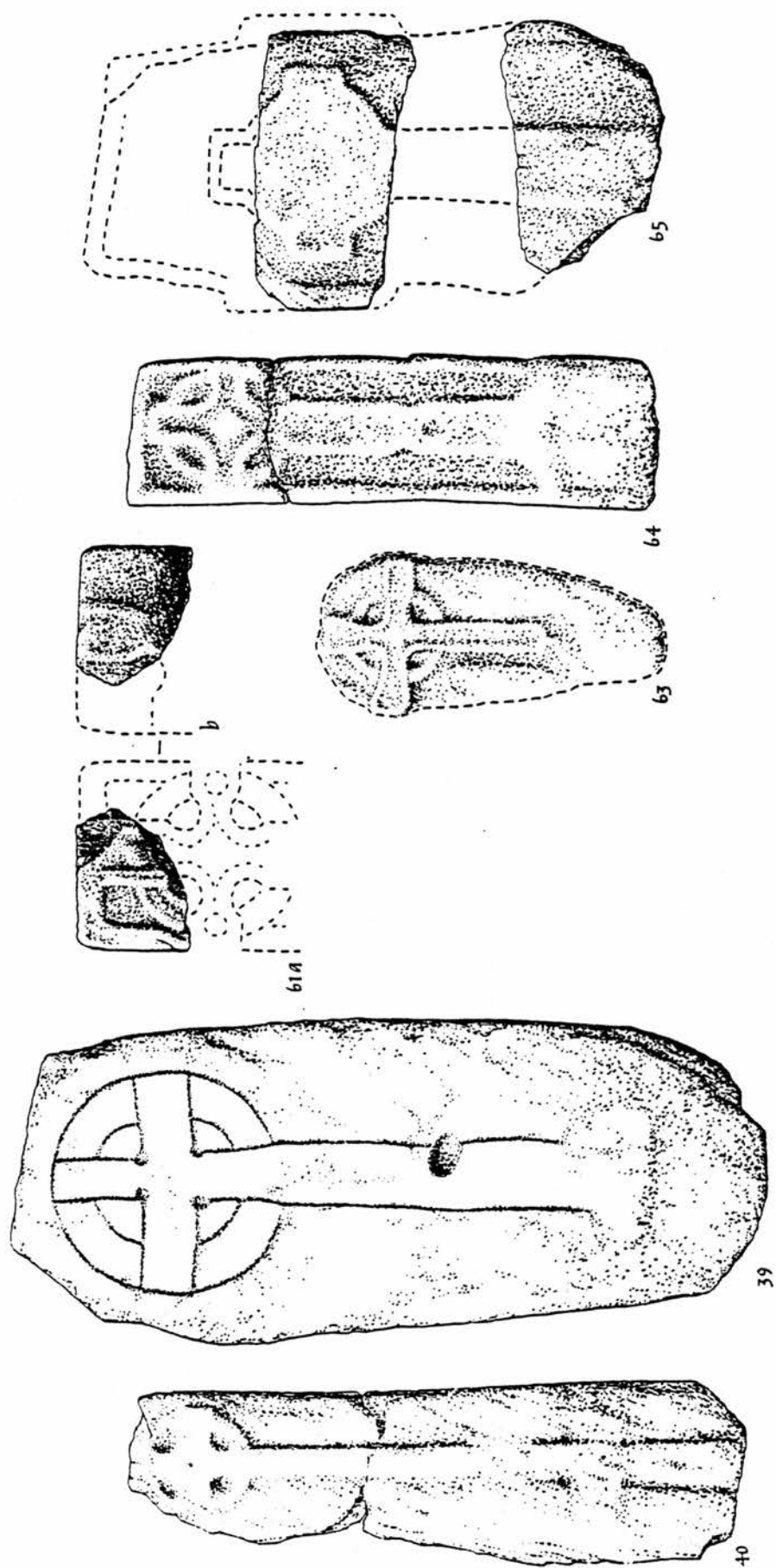


FIG. 34 LATE RINGED CROSS SLABS AT IONA (RCAHMS 1982, pp. 185, 189)



and elongated top arm recall the proportions of the Keills cross in Knapdale (pl. 44). The carving on the back of the Kilmartin cross is less assured than the carving on the front. The key pattern on the top arm appears to be a variation of No. 908, a late pattern seen on the Aldbar and St. Vigean's No. 11 cross slabs.<sup>122</sup> The transom of the raised cross on the back of Kilmartin bears debased spiral ornament and the carving of the key pattern on the shaft, the sole example of Romilly Allen's No. 956,<sup>123</sup> is particularly inept at the bottom. The extended but undecorated border on the back of Kilmartin recalls the extended border of Canna No. 1 (pls. 74-5).

The decorative repertoire of the Kilmartin cross derives primarily from late Pictish art and its treatment gives mute testimony to the impoverishment of the Gaelic sculptural tradition west of Druimalban after the ninth century. Stevenson dates it to the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>124</sup> There are a few remaining crosses and slabs whose decoration reflects Scandinavian taste and a few western examples of the Picto-Scottish style. St. Matthew's cross at Iona is the only major monument carved in the West Highlands and Islands after the Viking settlements began whose form and decoration are entirely Gaelic in character.

#### St. Matthew's Cross

St. Matthew's cross is the only example of a developed Irish high cross west of Druimalban. Arthur Kingsley Porter found that its style is "notably different from that of the Cross of St. Martin, but approaches closely that of Irish monuments such as Tihilly".<sup>125</sup> Dr. Stevenson and the Royal Commission also draw a distinction between the crosses of the Iona School and St. Matthew's cross and suggest a date for the latter between the mid-ninth and the early tenth

century.<sup>126</sup>

There is little to add to the discussion of St. Matthew's cross in the Iona Inventory. The Royal Commission recovered a fragment comprising most of the south arm and part of the head, which had broken off before 1764 (pl. 86). Another part of the head was still attached to the shaft until c. 1838, but was lost by the time Stuart's plate was drawn and cannot now be found.<sup>127</sup> The Iona Inventory suggests that the original proportions resembled those of the Kells Tower Cross.<sup>128</sup> St. Matthew's cross fell in the 1840s but was re-erected in its original stepped base, which is similar to the base of St. Martin's cross.<sup>129</sup> The diagonal key pattern in the bottom panel on the east face of the shaft (pls. 86A, 87) is vaguely reminiscent of the central shaft panel on the east face of St. John's cross (pl. 37), but the internal decoration of the St. Matthew's panel is now indistinguishable, although Romilly Allen said that it included serpents' heads.<sup>130</sup> The only other surviving decoration on the east face of the shaft is a damaged depiction of the Temptation of Adam and Eve. Most of the figure of Eve was lost between c. 1850 and c. 1874.<sup>131</sup> Temptation scenes are particularly common in Ireland and Nancy Edwards has compiled a list of 23 definite examples on Irish crosses, to which the Tihilly cross in County Offaly may be added.<sup>132</sup> There is also a possible late Pictish example at Farnell in Angus, which shows Adam and Eve clothed.<sup>133</sup> The St. Matthew's Temptation scene is of an Irish type and shows a serpent coiled around a tree whose branches are covered with stylized fruit and hang down to frame the figures of Adam and Eve on either side. The surviving figure of Adam crosses his wrists and covers his nakedness with his hands and we know from nineteenth century drawings that the lost figure of Eve was shown in a similar position.<sup>134</sup> The Iona Inventory notes that

the serpent's tail is wrapped around the forked base of a tree both in the St. Matthew's Temptation and in the corresponding scene on the broken West Cross at Kells.<sup>135</sup> There seems to have been another figural scene on the upper part of the west face of the shaft (pl. 86B) but it is now indecipherable. The cross Martin Martin called "St. Martin's Cross" is apparently the one now known as St. Matthew's, which Martin described as "an entire Stone eight Foot high", with a "large Crucifix" on the west face "and on the East a Tree".<sup>136</sup> The Crucifixion may have been depicted on the west side of the cross head, as it is on the Kells Market Cross, the Cross of the Scriptures at Clormacnoise and the Muiredach and West Crosses at Monasterboice.<sup>137</sup> The surviving interlace at the bottom of the shaft on the west side of St. Matthew's cross is an example of Romilly Allen's No. 701, which is found on the Pictish Meigle No. 4 and in variant forms in Ireland on the Kells Tower Cross and the Muiredach Cross at Monasterboice.<sup>138</sup> Little of the decoration of the surviving south arm of St. Matthew's cross is now recognizable, other than the plain outer border and the inner bead moulding of the constrictions of the arms on the east face and part of a beaded border on the west face. The quadrants within the ring were apparently sunken and unpierced.<sup>139</sup> Free-standing sculptured ringed crosses were first constructed by the Iona School in the middle or the second half of the eighth century. Between the mid-ninth and the early tenth century, Iona apparently had to send to Ireland for a sculptor who could carve an Irish high cross.

#### Scandinavian and Gall-Ghaidheal Sculpture

Only a few monuments carved in the West Highlands and Islands between the ninth and eleventh centuries are decorated in a Scandinavian style, but the Scandinavian presence during the period

is also reflected by two Hebridean cross slabs with runic inscriptions. The decoration of other carvings may tell us something of the sculptural taste of the Gall-Ghaidheil.

A fragment of a cross slab at Iona (Fig. 29, no. 94) originally bore crosses with rounded ampits and interior double-ribbon interlace on both sides. The cross on one face was ringed and the ring decorated with a simple fret pattern. The slab was carved out of a type of shaly sandstone known in the Isle of Man. The Iona Inventory dates the fragment to the tenth century, in view of similarities between its decoration and that of contemporary Manx slabs at Maughold.<sup>140</sup> Anglo-Scandinavian crosses covered with interlace and featuring rings decorated with fret patterns are also found at Kirklevington and North Otterington in Yorkshire.<sup>141</sup> A fret-decorated ring also appears in a West Highland context on the Ardchattan slab (pl.78).

The Scandinavian origin of the bifurcated interlace seen on the Ardchattan slab has already been discussed. Similar bifurcated interlace is used to frame four holes arranged in a cruciform pattern on a crude cross from Cill Chaitrìona near Balnahard in Colonsay (Fig. 30c),<sup>142</sup> which probably dates to the tenth or eleventh century. A twelfth- or thirteenth-century date has been suggested for a plain cruciform stone from North Rona, which has three holes arranged in a triangular pattern on the crossing.<sup>143</sup>

A thin (8 cm) broken cross shaft at Iona is carved in a Scandinavian style that invites comparison with Manx and Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture. One face is virtually covered with irregular double-ribbon interlace within wide borders which have inturned spiral terminals at the bottom (pl. 88A). The tail of the animal beneath the interlace to the left is "knotted round its body".<sup>144</sup>

The Iona Inventory notes that a "stylised beast" is also placed beneath a double-ribbon interlace pattern on the shaft of a cross on a Manx slab at Michael, but inturned-spiral border terminals are not found in the Isle of Man, although they appear on Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in the Ryedale area of north Yorkshire.<sup>145</sup> The Iona monument was apparently a cross at any rate and Anglo-Scandinavian crosses are common in the north of England, while the cross slab was favoured in Man. Inturned border spirals are also carved on the opposite face of the Iona cross shaft (pl. 88B), on either side of a confused scene which depicts a smith holding a hammer and surrounded by his tools, including pincers and shears; over a ship containing several smaller figures, some of whom may be armed. There does not seem to be enough information to connect the scene with the Sigurd story.<sup>146</sup>

Collingwood associated the Iona cross with Godred, the king of Man who died in 1187 and was buried at Iona,<sup>147</sup> but no sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands which reflects Scandinavian influence can be confidently dated to the late twelfth century. The Iona Inventory proposes a date for the cross in the tenth or early eleventh century<sup>148</sup> and we have seen that Olaf Cuarán of Dublin, the former king of York, died as a monk at Iona in 980. The Iona cross shaft provides us with no supporting evidence to connect it with Olaf, but an artistic exchange between Iona and Yorkshire is suggested by a fragment of an Anglo-Scandinavian cross head from St. Mary's Church, Castlegate, York. The York fragment has a crouching high-relief animal facing the centre of the cross on the surviving arm, which is reminiscent of the lions on the upper and lower arms on the west face of the Kildalton cross (pl. 41), and a boss on the opposite face which the Iona Inventory suggests may be a "crude copy" of bosses on

A cross slab from Dòid Mhàiri near Port Ellen in Islay, which is now in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, is perhaps the last monument west of Druimalban decorated in a Scandinavian style (pl. 89).<sup>150</sup> The cross, which Stevenson describes as "fluted", has extremely slender constrictions of the arms, a raised central boss, a raised outer moulding and a small ring with raised mouldings on its inner and outer curves.<sup>151</sup> A lost slab formerly in St. Oran's Chapel at Iona bore a similarly "fluted" ringed cross (Fig. 34, no. 63).<sup>152</sup> Only one cross slab at Iona features a ringed cross with a central boss (Fig. 34, no. 64), but the cross on one face of an upright slab at Iona (Fig. 34, no. 61a) has a boss at the intersection of the top arm and ring and may have had another boss at the lost centre of the cross head.<sup>153</sup> An unringed "fluted" cross is carved on a Bronze Age standing stone at the head of the bay of Camus nan Geall on the south shore of Ardnamurchan (Fig. 35b).<sup>154</sup> Romilly Allen suggested that the raised circular bosses above the arms of the cross on the Dòid Mhàiri slab might represent the sun and moon.<sup>155</sup> The double-beaded bands arranged horizontally and vertically on either side of the shaft bifurcate at the top and terminate in lobed tendrils, a feature which Dr. Stevenson has identified as characteristic of the Scandinavian Ringerike style.<sup>156</sup> Lobed tendrils usually emerge from animals or birds decorated in the Ringerike style. Examples are known in England, such as the early eleventh-century "Great Beast" on the famous slab found in the churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral in London in 1852 and the bird on the Winchester "weather-vane".<sup>157</sup> Lobed Ringerlike tendrils are also found on a slab from Otley in Yorkshire but the slab is broken and it cannot be determined if the tendrils belonged to animals.<sup>158</sup> Ringerike tendrils appear on Manx



slabs at Kirk Michael and Kirk Andreas, which David Wilson dates to the early eleventh century.<sup>159</sup> The Ringerike style was probably not used before the mid-eleventh century in Ireland, where it decorates highly stylized animals on the probably late eleventh-century shrine of the Cathach, the Clonmacnoise Crozier and the shrine fragment known as the Mísach.<sup>160</sup> The tendrils flanking the cross on the Dòid Mhàiri slab suggest foliage and lobed Ringerike tendrils of foliaceous character appear on the sides of the animal heads above the knop on the Cross of Cong, which is securely dated by its inscription between 1123 and 1136.<sup>161</sup> The date range in the second half of the eleventh century suggested by Dr. Stevenson and the Royal Commission for the Dòid Mhàiri slab<sup>162</sup> might be extended into the early twelfth.

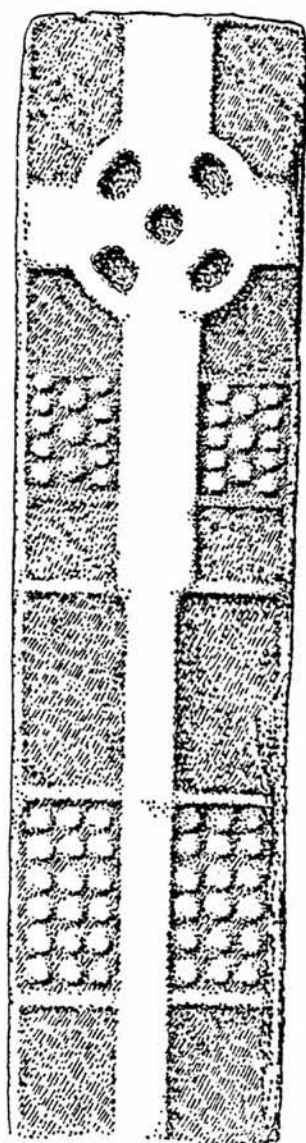
#### Slabs with Runic Inscriptions and Related Sculpture

Two slabs with Scandinavian runic inscriptions have been found in the Hebrides. Their decoration suggests additional comparisons with other Insular sculpture.

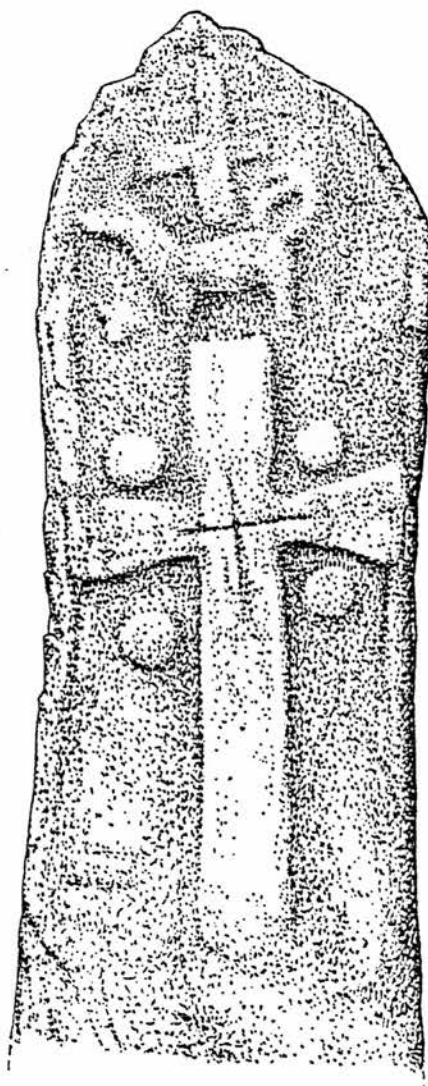
A fragment at Iona comprising half of a recumbent burial marker bears a Norse runic inscription which may be translated as "Kali the son of Ólvir laid this stone over (his) brother Fugl" (pl. 90, no. 69). The runic forms and the spelling imply a late tenth or eleventh century date for the slab.<sup>163</sup> The cross on the slab originally consisted of a continuous double ribbon interlaced with a central square, with knotted expansions mixed with figure-of-eight knots in the arm terminals. It would seem to be a later copy of the finest example of the type, a probably tenth-century cross slab at Iona (pl. 90, no. 68), which has double-beaded interlace in the cross-arm terminals and traces of an inscription in Latin letters, which was originally carved on three lines.<sup>164</sup> Related examples are also

known at Glendalough, Inis Cealtra, Clonmacnoise, and Papil in Shetland.<sup>165</sup> The unringed cross on another Iona fragment has small rounded ampits and its surviving shaft terminal divides to form a knot similar to those on the two other Iona slabs, but without the internal figure-of-eight knot (pl. 90, no. 67).<sup>166</sup> A cross slab from Cill Ealagain, Mulreesh in Islay features a double-ribbon cross interlaced at the centre with one surviving triple-looped terminal (Fig. 36d).<sup>167</sup> It, too, probably dates to the tenth or early eleventh century.

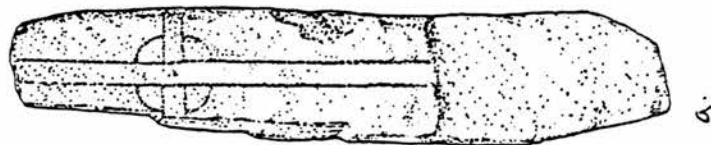
A slab at Kilchattan in Gigha may be related to the three Iona slabs bearing crosses with interlaced terminal expansions. The cross on the Kilchattan slab (pl. 91) is double-ringed and its shaft is interrupted by another ring and a four-loop interlace knot. The foot of the shaft expands through a small ring to form two pointed loops in a design comparable to the knotted terminals of the crosses on the three Iona slabs. A double-ringed cross of more conventional appearance appears on a broken slab from Laggan in Islay (Fig. 36c) and may be an early example of the type.<sup>168</sup> Pádraig Ó hÉilidhe dates to the late ninth or the tenth century five slabs in the Dublin region with double-ringed crosses.<sup>169</sup> A somewhat later date range is suggested for the Kilchattan slab by the two ornamental forms to the left of the cross shaft. The Kintyre Inventory relates the lower device to a type Kermode called a "Flyflot", examples of which are known in Cumberland and found in more developed form on a Manx slab at Conchan.<sup>170</sup> The upper device on the Kilchattan slab is a form of debased C-scroll ornament found on Manx slabs at Kirk Bride and Maughold, which also feature debased key patterns and hunting scenes vaguely suggestive of Pictish influence.<sup>171</sup> David Wilson dates the Kirk Bride and Maughold slabs between the mid-tenth and early



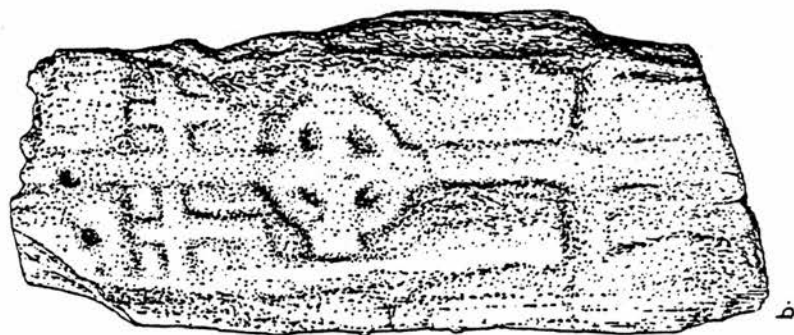
a. ST. NINIAN'S CHAPEL, SANDA  
(RCAHMS 1971, FIG. 155)



b. CAMUS NAN GEALL, ARNAMURCHAN  
(RCAHMS 1980, FIG. 158)

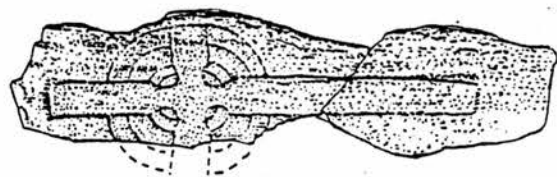


a.



b.

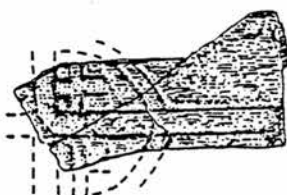
a-b GLEANN NA GAOTHE (No. 356.1-2)



c. LAGGAN (No. 378.1)



d. CILL EILEAGÁIN, MULREESH (No. 334)



e. ÉILEAN ORSAY (No. 387)

FIG. 36 ISLAY CROSS SLABS (BLAHMS 1984)

eleventh century<sup>172</sup> and the Kilchattan slab was probably carved during the same period.

The other Hebridean Norse runic inscription is incised in two lines reading from top to bottom on the back of a cross slab from Cille Bharra in Barra (pl. 92). The inscription has been dated to the early eleventh century and may be translated: "after Thorgerth, Steinar's daughter, this cross was raised".<sup>173</sup> The cross on the front of the slab has very small circular armpits and is filled with a plaitwork pattern which terminates in a loop at the foot of the cross. S-scrolls are incised under each arm over rectilinear key patterns. A slab found at Kilbride House near Rhudil in Mid-Argyll has a similar plaitwork-decorated cross with small armpits and scroll decoration in the quadrants (pl. 93).<sup>174</sup> The relief crosses on opposite faces of an unpublished upright slab at Keills in Knapdale also have small rounded armpits and incised rectilinear key patterns in the arm terminals (pls. 94-5) similar to those on the Cille Bharra slab. The cross on one side of the Keills slab may have had a central incised whirl pattern. Late spiral ornament and a debased key pattern are also found on a probably eleventh-century cruciform stone at Soroby in Tiree (Fig. 37).<sup>175</sup> The crude central boss and the three coiled serpents on the top arm of the cross on one face of the Soroby stone may be poor late derivatives of the ornament of the Iona School.

#### Gall-Ghaidheal Sculpture

The decoration of a probably recumbent burial slab at Iona and an upright cross slab and a cross fragment at Keills in Knapdale may reflect the taste of the Gall-Ghaidheil. The plain long-stemmed cross on one face of the Keills slab and the semicircle cut on one

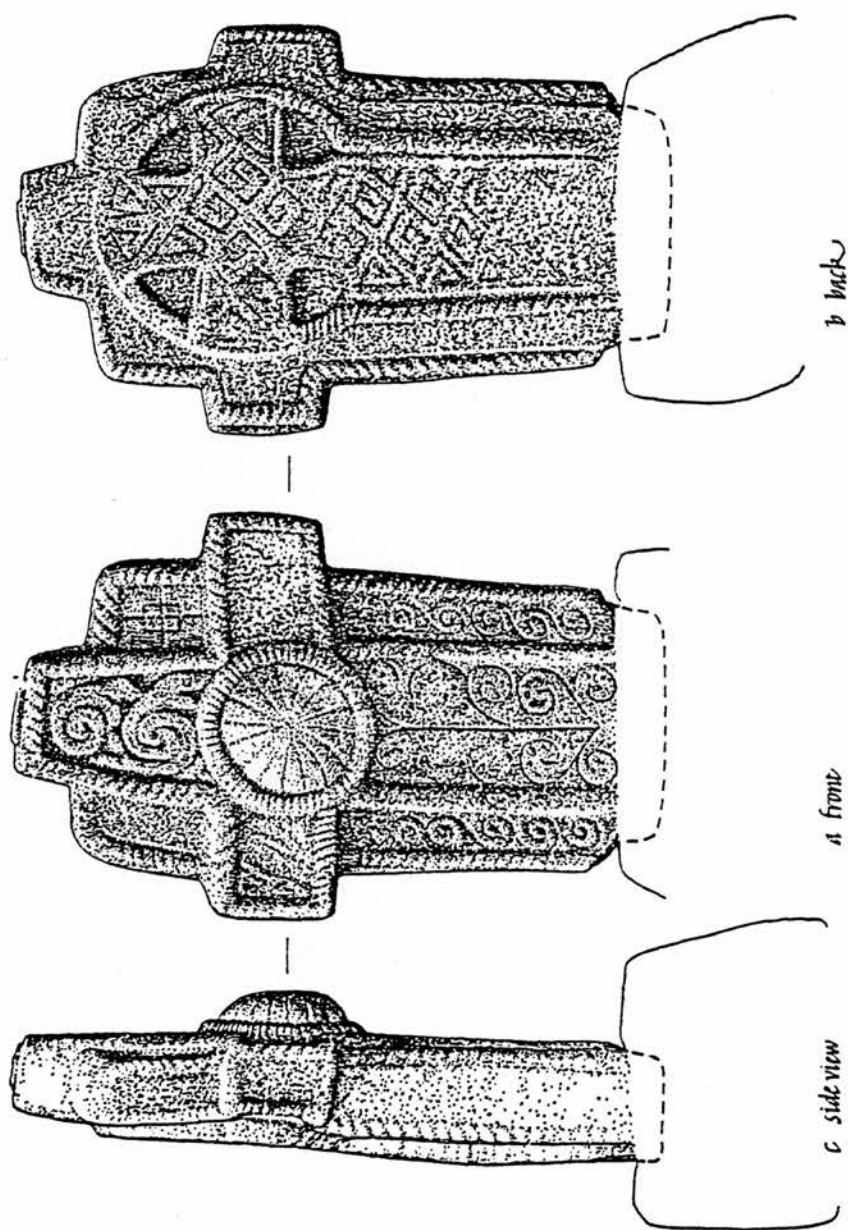


FIG. 37 CROSS SLAB, SOROBY, TÍREE (RCAHMS 1980, FIG. 199)



side of the Keills cross fragment, which suggests a small rounded armpit, provide additional means of identifying other sculptures of the period. The hammer-head cross carved in relief on a slab at Kilmory Knap lacks the interlace decoration that appealed to the Gall-Ghaidheil, but similar crosses occur in other areas with Gall-Ghaidheal connexions.

The Iona Inventory dates to the ninth or tenth century a ringed cross slab at Iona with two unique features: it is the only Iona slab that features a cross with double-curved arms similar to those of St. John's cross and the only one with a cross filled with interlace (pl. 96).<sup>176</sup> The cross expands slightly at the extremities and the arms and shaft are filled with a double row of interlaced Stafford knots, Romilly Allen's No. 601, with looped interlace of pattern No. 551 in the constrictions of the arms and a loose interlace knot at the centre.<sup>177</sup> No. 601 proved popular during the Viking period and is found on cross shaft fragments at Great Stainton, Hart and Jarrow in County Durham, which Professor Cramp dates to the first half of the tenth century;<sup>178</sup> and on cross fragments of the Anglo-Scandinavian period in north and west Yorkshire at Osmotherly, North Otterington, Simmington, Stonegrave, Ilkley, and Kirkheaton.<sup>179</sup> It is found in Scotland in loose double-beaded form on the Whithorn No. 6 cross shaft and in the borders of two Pictish recumbent monuments, Meigle No. 12 and St. Vigean's No. 13, which are probably no earlier than the mid-ninth century. It is also carved in the interiors of crosses on the St. Vigean's No. 17, Inchbrayock No. 2 and Kirriemuir Nos. 1 and 3 cross slabs,<sup>180</sup> none of which is likely to be earlier than the ninth century. Looped interlace of No. 551 shows a similar distribution, with examples in Yorkshire at Kirklevington, Pickhill and Leeds;<sup>181</sup> in County Durham on a cross shaft fragment at Hart which Cramp dates

to the mid-tenth century, and another at Sockburn which Cramp dates to the third quarter of the tenth century;<sup>182</sup> and on the Anglo-Scandinavian "Giant's Thumb" cross at Penrith in Cumbria.<sup>183</sup> No. 551 occurs rarely in a Pictish context, although it is found on a cross slab at Papil on the Isle of Burra in the Shetlands and the fish tails of the seated figure on Meigle No. 22 are interlaced in pattern No. 551.<sup>184</sup> The combined use of No. 601, which is found in Anglo-Scandinavian and Pictish sculpture, and No. 551, which is common in Anglo-Scandinavian but rare in Pictish sculpture, places the decoration of the Iona slab in a Scandinavian mould. The application of interlace patterns that appealed to Scandinavian taste to a ringed cross, whose form derived from St. John's cross at Iona, presents us with a combination of Norse and Gaelic taste proper to the Gall-Ghaidheil. The expanded extremities of the cross on the Iona slab may have influenced the shapes of ringed crosses on other slabs from Iona (Fig. 38, nos. 54-6, 58).<sup>185</sup>

The decoration of one face of an unpublished upright narrow cross slab at Keills in Knapdale provides another possible example of Gall-Ghaidheil taste. The front, or the side which originally bore the greatest amount of decoration, is now badly worn, but it seems to have featured a ringed cross head at one end with Stafford-knot terminals on the side arms and dense interlace at the centre, in the top arm and in the constriction of the lower arm (pl. 97).<sup>186</sup> The ring is slightly flattened at top and bottom but not truly quadri-lobate. The cross head is supported by a pedestal comprising a simple twist, which expands into a pair of loops at the centre and terminates at the foot in Stafford knots. There may have been some additional loops towards the top of the shaft.

The back of the Keills slab (pl. 98) bears a long-stemmed ringed

cross in relief with short top and side arms and all four arms of the cross head constricted inside the ring. A probably eighth-century inscribed slab at Iona features a cross with a small ringed head and an elongated shaft (Fig. 25, no. 45) and the ringed cross with an extended shaft on another Iona slab (Fig. 26, no. 51) was probably carved in the eighth or ninth century.<sup>187</sup> The long-stemmed ringed crosses crudely incised on slabs at Iona (Fig. 34, no. 39) and Gleann na Gaoithe in Islay (Fig. 36a) and a ringed cross with a slightly elongated shaft carved in false relief on a slab in the Iona Abbey Museum (Fig. 34, no. 64) could have been carved at any time between the eighth and eleventh centuries.<sup>188</sup> A ringed cross on the west face of an upright slab on the island of Sanda, at the south tip of Kintyre, has a shaft extended in the narrowed form of an elongated pedestal (Fig. 35a). The background of the slab below the ring is divided into horizontal registers, two of which are filled with small bosses or pellets, those in the lower register in ordered rows. Traces of decoration appear to be indicated in the other registers. The ornament on the east face of the slab seems to have been similar to that on the west, but is now almost entirely lost.<sup>189</sup> The Sanda slab is tall and narrow, a feature of late Pictish slabs, such as Sueno's Stone near Forres.<sup>190</sup> The registers of pellets may be related to the tight rows of pellets on the terminals of three late ninth- or tenth-century bossed penannular brooches recorded in Ireland and another from the Cuerdale hoard, which was deposited in Lancashire c. 903.<sup>191</sup> The Sanda slab is probably no earlier than the tenth century.

Another possible indication of Gall-Ghaidheal taste is provided by a stone at Keills that appears to be a cross-head fragment comprising the upper part of the shaft, which is decorated on opposite

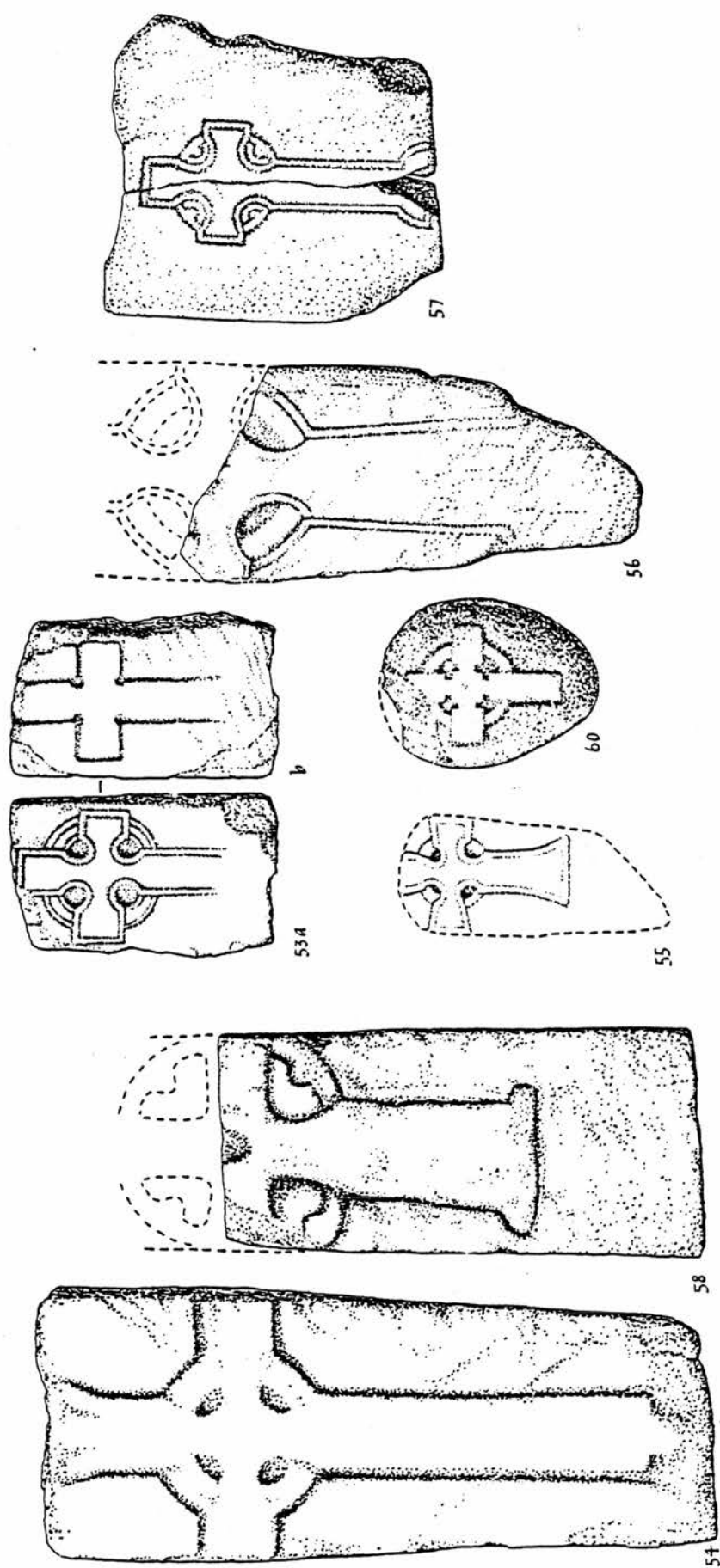


FIG. 38 POST-800 RINGED CROSS-SLABS AT IONA (RCAHMS 1982, 188)

faces, and part of the crossing. The decoration of the crossing is lost on both faces.<sup>192</sup> The remaining part of the shaft on one side has wide outer borders with narrow inner mouldings (pl. 99). Interlace pattern No. 601, which is also found on the "Gall-Ghaidheal" Iona slab, decorates the central area within the borders. The corresponding part of the shaft on the opposite face (pl. 100) was apparently decorated with a dense interlace pattern within narrow borders. An incised line creates a narrow border on one side of the surviving interlace, which terminates in a semicircle. The border along the other side is lost, although traces of its semicircular terminal are still discernible. The semicircles are placed beneath the expanded area of the stone, which was probably the intersection of the shaft and transom of a free-standing cross. The semicircular border terminals may have been intended to represent small rounded armpits on a cross whose actual armpits were rectilinear. The tendency towards crosses with small rounded armpits is noticeable at the end of the eighth century west of Druimalban on the Keills cross (pl. 44) and in Pictish Easter Ross in the early ninth century in the small rounded armpits of the equal-armed cross on the upper part of Rosemarkie No. 1.<sup>193</sup> Small semicircular depressions function as rounded armpits on the plain cross at Tarbert in Gigha (Fig. 28b). The cross on the probably early eleventh-century runic slab from Barra (pl. 92) has tiny circular armpits. In the West Highlands and Islands, the trend towards smaller armpits from the ninth to the eleventh century led to punched dots at the armpits of ringed and unringed crosses on an upright slab at Kilkerran in Kintyre (Fig. 33b), the cross on one face of an upright Iona slab (Fig. 38, no. 53b) and a crudely incised long-shafted ringed cross on another slab at Iona (Fig. 34, no. 39).<sup>194</sup> A recumbent slab in the Kilmartin churchyard

in Mid-Argyll features an unringed incised cross with punched dots at the armpits and traces of a modern inscription (pl. 101). A two-headed cross on a slab at Iona has a shaft with a small ringed cross head at one end and an unringed cross head at the other, which has punched dots at the armpits (Fig. 34, no. 40).<sup>195</sup> A crude slab at Clachan in Kintyre bears an unringed cross head with tiny hollowed armpits in false relief at one end of a shaft and an incised ringed cross head at the other (Fig. 33c).<sup>196</sup> The circles incised on the two cross heads may mark a feeble attempt to imitate bosses.

The hammer-head cross carved in relief with an incised border and incised central circle on a slab at Kilmory Knap (pl. 19, top)<sup>197</sup> alludes to the cultural contacts of the Gall-Ghaidheil in Britain. Hammer-head crosses seem to belong to the tenth and eleventh centuries and show a primarily western distribution with a concentration in Cumbria, while a slab near Kirkcolm in the Rhinns of Galloway has hammer-head crosses on two opposite faces.<sup>198</sup> There are also two west Yorkshire examples at Gargrave and Middlesmoor.<sup>199</sup> Dr. Bailey notes that hammer-head crosses are only found in areas with Gaelic-Norse place-names and concludes that "sculptural identities can be used as indications of more general ties".<sup>200</sup>

### Picto-Scottish Sculpture

The few western examples of Picto-Scottish sculpture were roughly contemporary with "Gall-Ghaidheil" sculpture. The Picto-Scottish style is characterized by the degeneration of figure sculpture in the period following the unification of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms. The Iona Inventory dates Picto-Scottish sculpture to the tenth and eleventh centuries and Isabel Henderson has suggested a ninth- and tenth-century date.<sup>201</sup> The origins of the Picto-



Scottish style are visible in the elongation of the foot soldiers and the enlarged head of the horseman on the back of the Dupplin cross in Perthshire, which also features late C-scrolls, interlace and key patterns. Distortion of a different kind is represented by the broadened bodies and enlarged heads of some of the figures on the Monifieth No. 4 cross shaft in Angus, whose other three faces are given over to interlace.<sup>202</sup> The figures in the upper register on the Picto-Scottish Tower of Lethendy fragment in Perthshire have elongated bodies and enlarged heads.<sup>203</sup> Similar figural distortion is visible in the west in the elongated torsoes of the Virgin and the Magus on Canna No. 1 (pl. 74).

We have seen that late Pictish influence was brought to bear in the West Highlands and Islands on the Canna and Eilean Mór crosses and combined with Scandinavian taste on the Ardchattan slab, but one hesitates to describe these monuments as "Picto-Scottish". On historical grounds, one might describe as "Picto-Scottish" any sculpture carved west of Druimalban or in the old Pictish heartland after the unification of the two kingdoms. At present, however, the term "Picto-Scottish" has a more limited stylistic purpose. The tunic of the large figure on Canna No. 2 (pl. 70) has Pictish features but the figure is fairly well-drawn. The wrestling figures on the Eilean Mór shaft (pl. 68) have tails and their faces are distorted, but their bodies are reasonably well-proportioned. The mounted figure on Canna No. 1 (pl. 74) is shown in proper proportion to his horse. The figures on the Ardchattan slab (pl. 78) are stylized but one does not expect to see bifurcated interlace of Scandinavian origin in Picto-Scottish sculpture.

There is, unfortunately, no ready-made label we can use to describe an unpublished slab fragment at Kilmichael of Inverlussa in

Mid-Argyll, although it seems to belong to a last wave fusion of Gaelic and Pictish taste in the west. The figural decoration of a cross shaft fragment at Iona and an unpublished slab at Kilmory Knap, however, provide examples of the Picto-Scottish style in the west.

The broken Kilmichael of Inverlussa slab may originally have been cruciform (pl. 102). Its low relief decoration is unusual and consists of a ringed cross with wide rounded armpits and an extended top arm which terminates in the head of an unringed cross with small rounded armpits. A wide border visible above the upper quadrants of the ring appears to have extended beyond the width of the rest of the slab to enclose the side arms of the ringed cross, which seem to have protruded past the diameter of the ring. The wide border around the unringed cross head is parallel to the shaft on both sides and angles inwards at the top on the right, suggesting a pediment, although the left side of the pediment is now lost. Small unringed crosses are carved below the side arms of the upper cross head. A possibly related slab at Gleann na Gaoithe in Islay features a false relief ringed cross with an extended upper arm and unringed crosses above the upper arm of the ring (Fig. 36b). The shaft of the ringed cross is sunken and intersects the sunken transom of an unringed cross.<sup>204</sup> A fragmentary cross slab from Eilean Orsay, Islay (Fig. 36e) seems to have shown a ringed cross with rectangular armpits and unringed crosses in the quadrants.<sup>205</sup> The Eilean Orsay slab could be as early as the eighth century or as late as the tenth or eleventh.

Spiral ornament survives on the left arm and in the central disc of the Kilmichael of Inverlussa slab. Traces of a late C-scroll pattern, of the type seen on the Dupplin cross, are visible on the left arm. The central disc is decorated with a triple spiral whose spirals may have terminated in either bird heads or bearded human

heads. The circular border of the spiral disc is interrupted in three places by additional shapes which invade the central disc, but the intrusive forms appear to be of a different type from those that serve a similar function on the Ardchattan slab (pl. 78).

Two seated figures with elongated legs, their knees drawn up to their chins, are carved in profile in the upper quadrants of the ringed cross on the Kilmichael slab, with their backs to the centre. The decoration of the lower quadrants is lost. Seated figures shown in profile with their knees drawn up appear in the borders between the columns of the Canon Tables on fols. 1V, 2R and 3R in the Book of Kells. All of them are male and are shown tugging their beards. The knees of the figures on fol. 2R are separated and the seated figures on fol. 3V cross their legs. The seated figure in the arches over the Canon Table on fol. 5R also cross their legs and the one on the right seems to raise a stylized hand to his face.<sup>206</sup> The seated figures above the top arm of the cross on the Drumhallagh slab in Donegal face the top arm, raise their hands to their faces and appear to put their thumbs in their mouths.<sup>207</sup> The figure in the upper right quadrant of the ringed cross on the Kilmichael of Inverlussa slab may also raise a hand to his face, but the detail is unclear. A seated figure with one knee raised and the other, shorter leg straight out in front of him sits on the left arm of the cross on the Meigle No. 8 fragment and faces the top arm. The Meigle No. 27 fragment, which features late C-scroll ornament, shows a figure with his knees drawn up, seated on the ground behind another figure, who is tilting back in a chair.<sup>208</sup> Isabel Henderson has discussed the stylistic relationship between the Book of Kells and the seated human figures with raised knees who are attacked by birds on Meigle No. 9 and Monifieth No. 3.<sup>209</sup> The seated figures in the swastika pattern on the side of Meigle No. 26 have

raised knees, but their lower legs are perpendicular to their torsoes. The seated figures on the Kilmichael of Inverlussa slab suggest comparisons with figures in the Book of Kells and in Irish and Pictish sculpture but, by facing outwards, they seem to negate what was probably their original function of adoring the cross. The similarities between the seated figures on the Kilmichael slab and those on late Pictish slabs such as Meigle Nos. 8 and 27, and the presence at Kilmichael of a type of late C-scroll ornament known in the old Pictish heartland, place the Kilmichael of Inverlussa slab in the period following the unification of the two kingdoms, without necessarily making it a clear example of the Picto-Scottish style.

A cross shaft fragment at Iona has been accepted as an example of the Picto-Scottish style. Its narrow sides are undecorated but decoration survives on its two broad faces. One side appears to depict a very thin angel with outspread wings over two figures who face the viewer (pl. 103, left). The Iona Inventory notes that the "apparent lower extension" of the angel's wings might also suggest "the side-posts of a chair or throne". Two figures are shown standing in front of a chair or throne with elongated side-posts on the probably tenth-century St. Vigean's No. 11.<sup>210</sup> The scene on the Iona fragment may represent "ecclesiastics sheltered by a guardian angel", a motif found on the Tower of Lethendy fragment and in Ireland on the eleventh-century shrine of the Stowe Missal.<sup>211</sup> The iconography of the figural side of the Iona fragment supports the tenth- or eleventh-century date suggested by the Iona Inventory.<sup>212</sup> Figures were also carved on the opposite face of the Iona fragment (pl. 103, right), which shows the feet of two confronted figures at the top, above two separate interlace patterns, the lower one of which seems to have included either animal-head terminals or human figures.<sup>213</sup>

An unpublished cross slab at Kilmory Knap on the east side of Loch Sween may also be an example of the Picto-Scottish style (pl. 104). It bears an incised ringed cross with an angel carved in low relief on the top arm. Traces of plaitwork, visible on the shaft of the cross, suggest contemporaneity with the crosses on the probably eleventh century Barra and Kilbride slabs (pls. 92-3). The Kilmory Knap slab is badly weathered and the decoration of the panels on either side of the top arm of the cross cannot be identified. A hooded horseman is carved in low relief under the lower right quadrant of the ring. Two figures with enlarged heads are carved underneath the rider. The figure on the right faces to the right. The one on the left faces the viewer with his head placed above the head of a smaller figure, who is shown with his back to the cross shaft, holding a sword. The slab is broken at the bottom but the surviving head of a human figure at the bottom right faces the viewer while holding its hand to its mouth. An outward-facing animal is carved beneath the lower left quadrant of the ringed cross. The apparent confusion of the scene to the right of the cross shaft and the enlarged heads of its figures are indicative of the degeneration characteristic of the Picto-Scottish style. The Kilmory Knap slab was probably carved in the late tenth or eleventh century.

#### The End of Early Medieval Sculpture West of Druimalban

The production of relief sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands was brought to an abrupt, if temporary halt by the initial Viking raids. The Iona School has left no traces of its work at Kells and there is a stylistic gap between the Iona School crosses and the High Crosses of Kells. The Applecross fragments reveal an interest in panelled decoration similar to that which informed Rosemarkie No. 1

in Easter Ross, but while sculpture continued to be carved in Easter Ross, production apparently ceased at Applecross. Ringed crosses were probably carved on burial markers at Iona during the first half of the ninth century, at a time when Iona may have had a great need for them. When relief sculpture began to be carved anew west of Druimalban in the mid-ninth century, it reflected the changes that had taken place in the interim.

The unification of the kingdoms of the Scots and Picts in the 840s is reflected in the second half of the ninth and in the tenth century by the decoration of the two crosses in Canna, the Eilean Mór cross shaft, and the Ardchattan and Eigg slabs. The wrestling figures on the Eilean Mór shaft and the abbreviated Adoration of the Magi on Canna No. 1 suggest the influence of Irish taste in iconography, but the fantastic animals on the same two monuments are rather more likely to have responded to spoken Pictish when they were at home. The now headless man on the front of Canna No. 2 seems to have had a Pictish tailor, although his triquetras are harder to explain. The Vikings largely displaced the Picts in Shetland and Orkney and, to a lesser extent, in Caithness and Sutherland. Some northern Pictish refugees may have made their way to the Western Isles in the early ninth century. If so, their presence west of Druimalban had no effect on the appearance of local relief sculpture before the mid-ninth century. By then, some form of assimilation, or at least cultural adaptation, would presumably have taken place. It is impossible to say whether the Canna and Eilean Mór crosses were carved by Picts under Gaelic influence or by Gaels under Pictish influence. The Ardchattan slab might have been carved by a Pict under Scandinavian influence or by a Gall-Ghaidheal sculptor under Pictish influence. The Eigg cross slab is a provincial Class III monument and



it seems likely that its patron or its sculptor, or possibly both, were Pictish.

St. Matthew's cross at Iona was probably carved during the same period as the Carra and Eilean Mór crosses. Its undeniable Gaelic character is sadly out-of-place among its contemporaries west of Druimalban. Its sculptor was trained in Ireland and presumably returned to Ireland when St. Matthew's cross was completed.

The sculptural taste of the Vikings and the Gall-Ghaidheil seems to have had little effect in the West Highlands and Islands before the tenth century, although the Iona "Gall-Ghaidheal" cross slab may have been carved in the late ninth. The Gall-Ghaidheal slab and cross fragment at Keills in Knapdale may have been carved in the late ninth century, but are perhaps more likely to belong to the tenth. The interlace decoration of a cross slab fragment at Iona is comparable to Manx sculpture and was probably carved in the tenth century. The Scandinavian cross shaft at Iona may have been a contemporary of the Barra runic slab and both seem to belong to the late tenth or early eleventh century. The debased Ringerike ornament of the Dòid Mhàiri slab suggests an eleventh or early twelfth-century date.

Degeneration had set in by the time the Dòid Mhàiri slab was carved and is also reflected by the Picto-Scottish cross shaft fragment at Iona and the Kilmory Knap cross slab with figural decoration. Both may have been carved in the tenth century, but the Kilmory Knap slab is perhaps more likely to belong to the eleventh.

In 1098, king Magnus Bareleg of Norway raided Lewis, Uist, Skye, Tiree, Mull, Islay, Sanda, and Kintyre, although he spared Iona. By then, as Smyth notes, "the steam had gone out of the Viking Age".<sup>214</sup> The steam had also gone out of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban and a new set of circumstances had to evolve before relief

sculpture was to play a significant role again in the cultural life of the West Highlands and Islands.

The political and religious factors which made possible the late medieval sculpture of the West Highlands emerged in the twelfth century. Somerled mac Gille-Brigde is described as "King of the Hebrides and of Kintyre" at his death in 1164.<sup>215</sup> In the year of Somerled's death, a delegation from Iona including the lector, an anchorite and the head of the Céilí Dé, asked Flaithbertach Ó Brolcháin, the abbot of Derry and successor of Columba, to take the abbacy of Iona, but the archbishop of Armagh and the Irish high king "restrained him".<sup>216</sup> The last link with Iona's Celtic past was broken. A Cistercian monastery was built at Saddell in Kintyre in the second half of the twelfth century and Somerled's son Reginald founded the Benedictine monastery and Augustinian nunnery at Iona at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Reginald's sister was apparently the first prioress of the nunnery.<sup>217</sup> The last sculpture in the West Highlands to echo the open ring of St. John's cross is a cross head fragment found near Southend in Kintyre, but the figure of the Crucified Saviour on the Kintyre fragment looks forward to Crucifixions common in the late medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands.<sup>218</sup>

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175. RCAHMS 1980, 168, pl. 34C.
176. RCAHMS 1982, 16, 191.
177. ECMS III, 387, fig. 402.
178. Cramp 1984, 92-3, 107, pls. 77:388, 79:399, 80:400, 91:483-4.
179. Collingwood 1907, 376, 378, 387, 400; Collingwood 1915, 194, 208, 265-6.
180. ECMS II, 233, III, figs. 239A, 264A, 269A, 288A, 525B.
181. Collingwood 1907, 352, 381; Collingwood 1915, 213, 264.
182. Cramp 1984, 93, 138, pls. 79:397, 134:727, 729.
183. Bailey 1980, fig. 9.
184. ECMS II, 215, III, figs. 6, 350.
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186. A probably late ninth or tenth-century slab at Kilfinnan in Cowal (ECMS III, fig. 409) features an analogous interlace-decorated cross at the top on one face, above a pattern of open-jawed serpents emerging from interlace roundels. There is a long-stemmed ringed cross on the opposite face. The slab is kept in an unlit vault and I have not seen it in sufficient light to be able to discuss it here. It will be fully published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland in Argyll: An Inventory of the Monuments, vol. 7, Cowal (forthcoming).
187. RCAHMS 1982, 187.
188. RCAHMS 1982, 184, 189; RCAHMS 1984, 183.
189. RCAHMS 1971, 151, 153, pl. 51C.
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191. Johansen, Olav Sverre, "Bossed Penannular Brooches: A Systematization and Study of Their Cultural Affinities", Acta Archaeologica 44, 1973, 81-5, figs. 56-7; Graham-Campbell, James, "Bossed Penannular Brooches: a Review of Recent Research", Medieval Archaeology 19, 1975, 34-5, 39, 49, pl. VIIA, C-D.
192. Alternatively, the decorated areas on both faces might originally have served as the top arm of the cross, but are treated here, for the sake of convenience, as the upper part of the shaft. One side of the fragment is illustrated in White 1875, pl. 43.5.
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195. Ibid., 184-5.
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198. Bailey 1980, 182-3, fig. 46; ECMS III, fig. 514A-B.
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208. ECMS III, figs. 316A, 353A-B.
209. Henderson 1982, 95, pls. XIIa-b; ECMS III, figs. 243A, 343A.
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## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Seen against its own historical and archaeological background, the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland reflects the Gaelic absorption of the old Pictish western province, the spread of Christianity, the vigour of the pre-Viking church, and the resilience of the inhabitants and their religion in the face of Viking raids and settlement. Viewed in a wider art historical context, early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban offers additional insight into the development of Insular sculpture in the early medieval period.

The existence of a Pictish province west of Druimalban and north of Ardnamurchan is suggested by place-names, Ptolemy's map and archaeological finds. Pit- place-names have been recorded on the West Highland mainland in Lochcarron and Glenelg. Ptolemy's name for the Sea of the Hebrides, Due Caledonios, suggests that the Outer Hebrides were once included in the territory of the Caledonii, who are generally regarded as forebears of the Picts east of Druimalban. A type of stone house discovered in North Uist and dated between the seventh and ninth centuries is comparable to similar structures in Orkney, which have been identified as Pictish. Excavation at another site in North Uist has yielded a bone knife handle with a Pictish ogham inscription and a bone handle similar in form to the handles of some Pictish Mirror symbols. The relationships between the Eilean Tioram hanging-bowl escutcheon, the Craig Phadrig mould, the Tummel Bridge escutcheon, and swivel rings found in North Uist and Tiree show that Pictish metalwork was known on both sides of Druimalban.

The existence of a western Pictish province suggested by place-names, Ptolemy's map and archaeological finds is confirmed by the

distribution of incised Pictish symbols in Gairloch, Skye, Raasay, and the Outer Isles. With the possible exception of the Gairloch stone, the western symbol stones are typologically late. The typological lateness of the western Pictish symbol stones reflects the extent to which the western Picts had become peripheral, by the time the Class I series emerged in the Pictish heartland east of Druimalban.

The assimilation of the western Picts by the Gaels of Dál Riata is more clearly chronicled than the later assimilation of the heartland Picts, following the political unification of the Scots and Picts in the mid-ninth century. The establishment of a Gaelic polity in Argyll by c. 500 set the stage for the northward expansion of Gaelic Christianity, into the old Pictish western province, in the later sixth and seventh centuries. According to his Latin Life, Comgall of Bangor attempted to found a monastery in Tiree in the mid-sixth century, but was repulsed by Pictish raiders. A subsequent Columban foundation at Mag Lunge in Tiree was more successful and survived until at least 775, when it is last mentioned in the annals. Columba himself converted a Pictish military leader in Skye. The destruction of Donnán's monastery in Eigg in 617 is more likely to represent Pictish resistance to the territorial encroachment of Dál Riata, than Pictish opposition to the new religion. Christianity had already received a more neutral reception in the late sixth century from the Pictish king Bruide son of Maelchú, who guaranteed the safety of Cormac Ua Liatháin's missionary activities in the Northern Isles. Maelrubai apparently met no opposition from the indigenous Picts when he founded his monastery at Applecross c. 673.

Skye and Raasay seem to have served as the political centre of the Pictish western province in the seventh century. A kindred linked

to Skye and Raasay by the annals, Old Irish literature and place-name evidence produced at least one king of the Picts, Gartnait son of Donnall, who died c. 663. His kindred were apparently already related to the Dál Riata and the Dalriadic king Donnall Brecc may have been his father. The misfortunes of Cano son of Gartnait and his near relations in the late seventh and early eighth centuries belong to the period when the Picts east of Druimalban abandoned their western province to the Gaels of Dál Riata, and seem to reflect ill-fated Pictish resistance to the Gaelic takeover of Skye. The typologically late Pictish symbol stones in the west were probably carved during the same period.

Adomnán, writing at the end of the seventh century, informs us that all of the territory west of Druimalban belonged to Dál Riata by that time. It therefore seems unlikely that any Pictish symbol-carvers in the west would have been able to find patrons much later than the early eighth century. In order to allow sufficient time for the development of the typologically earlier Pictish symbols incised east of Druimalban, Isabel Henderson's c. 600 date for the emergence of the symbol series must now be seen as preferable to Robert Stevenson's c. 700 date.

Incised and false relief Christian carvings, of a type known in Ireland and the rest of Celtic Britain, including simple crosses, hexafoils and Chi Rho monograms, are found throughout the West Highlands and Islands. An earlier class of monuments found in Wales, southwest Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Ireland, consisting of memorials inscribed in ogham or Latin letters, is barely represented west of Druimalban. None of the west Highland incised Christian carvings is likely to be earlier than the late sixth century. The possibility that some of the incised West Highland carvings may

reflect contact with Gaul is strengthened by Adomnán's account of a ship from Gaul landing on the coast of Argyll and by the discovery of E ware sherds at Dunadd and in Skye and Kintyre. For the most part, however, the earliest Christian sculpture found west of Druimalban suggests connexions with other early Insular Celtic Christian carvings. The hexafoils at Cladh a' Bhile and Kilberry in Knapdale provide examples of the chip-carving technique, which was also known in Ireland. Several West Highland crosses of arcs and Chi Rho monograms reflect the influence of Whithorn, before Whithorn had an Anglo-Saxon bishop. A dressed upright slab in Raasay marks the progress of Christianity among the western Picts; its incised decoration includes Pictish symbols and a Chi Rho in the form of a cross of arcs. The stark simplicity of most of the incised crosses west of Druimalban pays silent tribute to the humble lives of the monks and hermits who probably carved them.

Rectangular stone slabs had already been roughly dressed in the West Highlands and Islands, southwest Scotland and Ireland before relief sculpture appeared in an early medieval Insular context, but the techniques of relief carving were brought to the British Isles from the Continent. Insular relief sculpture first appears in Northumbria in an architectural setting in the late seventh and early eighth century. Northumbrian masons were taught the techniques of relief carving by Continental craftsmen and the Northumbrian sculptors subsequently passed on their skills to Pictish artisans in Angus. The distinctive form of Pictish Class II monuments, comprising a cross in relief on a rectangular slab decorated with Pictish symbols, Insular ornament, and human and animal figures, probably emerged by the second quarter of the eighth century. The transition from incised Pictish Class I monuments to Class II relief slabs is discernible



in the combination of false relief and low relief on some Pictish cross slabs. The relief carving on the earliest Class II monuments is generally low.

The sculptured crosses of the Iona School were most probably carved between the mid-eighth century and the beginning of the ninth and reflect contact with Pictland and Northumbria. Free-standing wooden crosses had previously appeared in a Gaelic context and sculptured stone crosses were erected in Northumbria by c. 740. The techniques of relief sculpture are likely to have been introduced to the West Highlands and Islands from Pictland following the Pictish conquest of Dál Riata c. 740. High relief also appeared in Pictland during the same period. Northumbrian sculptors seem to have achieved high relief at Jarrow, Bewcastle and Ruthwell before high relief appeared in either Dál Riata or Pictland. Similarities between the high relief serpents and bosses ornament of the Iona School and that of Pictish monuments at St. Andrews and Nigg suggest interaction between Iona, St. Andrews and a Pictish sculptural centre in Easter Ross. Correspondences between the ornament of the Iona crosses and metalwork of probable Gaelic origin support an Iona origin for the serpents and bosses motif. The David iconography which appears on some Iona School crosses may reflect Pictish influence. The Virgin and Child scenes on three Iona School crosses imply a relationship with Northumbria. The double-curved arms of St. John's cross reflect Northumbrian influence. Iona School depictions of Cain and Abel, the Sacrifice of Abraham and Daniel in the Lions' Den suggest access to Mediterranean sources which also informed the later Irish scripture crosses, but had little effect in Pictland or Northumbria. The iconography of the Iona School crosses is especially deserving of further study and additional work on its sources could have much to

tell us about the development of Christian iconography in early medieval Insular art.

Relief sculpture was also carved west of Druimalban at sites other than Iona before the arrival of the Vikings. The relief carving of the Riasg Buidhe "face cross" slab is unlikely to be earlier than the eighth century. Three fragments of relief sculpture at Applecross suggest that Applecross had a distinctive and highly skilled sculptural workshop of its own when the Vikings first arrived.

The earliest Viking attacks had a devastating effect on the West Highlands and Islands. The Iona School and the Applecross workshop both seem to have collapsed at the beginning of the ninth century, when the headquarters of the Columban paruchia was transferred from Iona to Kells and the monasteries at Applecross, Kildonnan and Mag Lunge in Tiree apparently ceased to function. The Scottish and Pictish kingdoms were unified under Dalriadic control in the mid-ninth century, but were governed thereafter from royal centres east of Druimalban, effectively reducing the West Highlands and Islands to provincial status.

Following an apparent hiatus of about half a century, relief sculpture began to be carved again west of Druimalban in the second half of the ninth century. By then, some of the Viking settlers in the area had been converted to Christianity and a new population group, the hybrid Gall-Ghaidheil, had emerged in the Hebrides. The relief sculpture carved in the West Highlands and Islands from the mid-ninth to the eleventh century is also hybrid, with the notable exception of St. Matthew's cross at Iona, an Irish high cross carved by a sculptor brought over from Ireland. Decorative patterns popular in Pictland were applied to otherwise Gaelic crosses at Canna, Eilean Mór and Kilmartin. The decoration of a cross slab at Ardchattan

includes Pictish David iconography and Scandinavian features. Cross slabs at Iona and Keills in Knapdale and a cross fragment at Keills combine Gaelic cross forms with interlace decoration of a type also known in an Anglo-Scandinavian context. A cross slab at Iona bears an expansional cross of a Gaelic type and a Norse runic inscription. A cross-shaft fragment at Iona and a cross slab at Kilmory Knap provide examples of the Picto-Scottish style.

The late Pictish influence apparent in some monuments carved west of Druimalban in the second half of the ninth and in the tenth century could be seen to indicate a resuscitation of the moribund Pictish culture of the old Pictish western province. It should be noted, however, that there are no Class II Pictish monuments in the west and only one Class III slab, from Kildonnan in Eigg. The disruption caused by the Vikings led to general disruption and late Pictish influence in the west probably reflects an influx of Pictish refugees from the Northern Isles and Picts moving east from the Pictish heartland after the unification of the kingdoms of the Scots and Picts.

Few sculptures stylistically attest the Scandinavian presence in the West Highlands and Islands. Runic inscriptions are carved on cross slabs in Barra and Iona. A fragment of a tenth-century cross slab at Iona is comparable to contemporary Manx monuments. A Scandinavian cross shaft at Iona suggests connexions with the Isle of Man and with Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in Yorkshire. The bifurcated and pelleted interlace on the Ardchattan slab reflects Scandinavian taste. The Dòid Mhàiri slab in Islay is decorated in the Ringerike style, but it is of inferior quality and may be as late as the early twelfth century. In sculptural terms, the Scandinavian settlers destroyed more than they gave to the West Highlands and Islands.

The diversity of early medieval sculpture west of Druimalban reflects the changes in the composition of the population of the region during the period and stands in marked contrast to the stylistically cohesive late medieval sculpture of the West Highlands and Islands. The cultural and political unity characteristic of the late medieval Lordship of the Isles developed under the leadership of the kindred of Somerled, which emerged in a dominant role in the mid-twelfth century. The various artistic currents visible in the early medieval sculpture of the West Highlands had all but disappeared by the lifetime of Somerled and another two centuries were to pass before the late medieval style began to spread throughout the Lordship of the Isles. Late medieval West Highland sculpture is distinctive but its artistic significance is provincial. In the early medieval period, however, the West Highlands and Islands played a major, even pivotal role in the development of Christian sculpture in northern Britain and Ireland.

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